

OLD
RENSSELAERVILLE

MARY FISHER TORRANCE

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(NEW YORK), 1651

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"Ever'thing comes t' him who waits
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OLD PHOTOGRAPH OF VILLAGE (YEAR 1890 ?)

Looking west from beyond Episcopal Church.

Attributed to John ("Jack") Niles Huyck.

THE STORY
OF
OLD
RENSSELAERVILLE

BASED ON OLD DOCUMENTS, EARLY PUBLICATIONS
PUBLIC RECORDS, FAMILY LETTERS AND DATA
FURNISHED BY OLDEST INHABITANTS, WELDED
TOGETHER, AND HOPING TO MAKE SENSE.

BY
MARY FISHER TORRANCE

NEW YORK
PRIVATELY PRINTED
1939

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Dedicated to my mother
HENRIETTA LESTER MULFORD
who was born in Rensselaerville.

1847 — 1931

RENSSELAERVILLE

Settled in 1787

Albany 27 Mi

Boston 210 Mi



Lake George 88 Mi

Montreal 262 Mi

Catkill 29 Mi

Kingslon 52 Mi



New York 144 Mi

Washington 371 Mi

CHAPTER I.

THE COLONY OF RENSSELAERWYCK

TWENTY-FOUR miles out from Albany, following route 85, one comes upon a little village out beyond the Helderbergs, in the valley of Ten Mile Creek, that seems like a transplanted bit of New England. There are typically colonial white houses with green blinds, and the steepled meeting houses, showing between the treetops. Only the name of the place, "Rensselaerville", bespeaks a Dutch origin.

Every school child who has studied the history of the Empire State, knows of Hendrick Hudson; his sail in the little sloop "The Halfmoon," scarcely larger than a pleasure boat, carrying a crew of 18 men, up the river which later was to bear his name. The story goes that he went about as far as the present site of Albany, and decided to go no further. There he planted his flag, and claimed the land in the name of the Dutch.

The word went back to Holland, and the Crown wasted no time in pushing its claim. As early as the year 1618, a treaty was drawn up between the Dutch governor of the New Netherlands and the chiefs of the Five Nations, then constituting the Iroquois, stipulating that no land was to be appropriated by settlers, without first satisfying the Indians in actual possession. Out of this treaty, an alliance was formed that worked satisfactorily for both sides; the Dutch needed the Iroquois, as allies against the French invasions from Canada, while the Iroquois required the Dutch, with their firearms, as against the Algonquin Indians in Canada, who were getting their firearms from the French.

In 1623, the Holland States General approved the incorporation of the Dutch West India Company, composed of busi-

ness men, who were primarily interested in cornering the fur trade in the new world. But the government knew that to strengthen the New Netherlands required first of all, settlers; and the problem was to get them there, the sooner the better.

In 1629, the "Charter of Privileges and Exemptions" provided that to any member of the Company who would undertake the start of a colony in the new territory, a huge tract of land should be granted, under certain conditions. To become a "Patroon"—the head of such a colony was to be given this title—a man must within four years' time send over a group of fifty persons, of fifteen years of age or over, together with food supplies, livestock, farming implements, etc., sufficient to get them started on the land, and maintain them until they were self-sustaining, on their own feet. Now, this was a large order; the trip across the ocean from Amsterdam to Manhattan took at least 64 days, under favorable winds, and it is not strange that the Company's offer found few takers; and that of those who started, few came through to arrive at the distinction of becoming Patroons.

But we are concerned, for our story, only with one who did; that one being Kilean Van Rensselaer, a pearl merchant of Amsterdam—the founder of the Colony of Rensselaerwyck; that comprised a vast acreage of land bordering twenty-four miles down on both sides of the Hudson River, and twenty-four miles back, including pretty much what is now Rensselaer, Albany, and (part of) Columbia counties. The trading post at "Fort Orange" (later City of Albany) was carefully excluded from Rensselaerwyck, being reserved to the Company itself.

Kilean Van Rensselaer himself never came over to visit his holdings; it is even said that he repented of his bargain after he had undertaken it, and tried to sell his interest. But seemingly, he couldn't get anyone to buy him out, for under the leadership of a son, he qualified by sending over the required quota of settlers, and everything that had to go with them to start a colony. Nobody kept a diary of the trip across; but rumor has told us of days becalmed, when the ducks and other water-minded livestock were put overboard, to stretch their legs, and be allowed a little swim. Then, when the breeze came up, we can imagine the steward calling the Dutch equivalent

of "All aboard," with every duck and drake scuttling back refreshed to resume the voyage.

The colony of Rensselaerwyck succeeded while others similarly failed. The settlers, however, preferred trade to agriculture, and stuck pretty closely to the lands along the river best fitted for commerce. The Dutch Company clung to their original ruling that in the matter of trafficking in furs, "All foreigners and unlicensed traders" were rigidly excluded.

On the 4th day of September, 1664, the Dutch rule gave way to the English, which made no difference to "Rensselaerwyck" except that the patroonship became officially an English manor with a "lord" obligated to render certain feudal services to the English crown. Under the English law of entail, the land passed in entirety from father to eldest son, who succeeded to the title of Lord of the Manor. But the name "Patroon" persisted in popular parlance, as if the people preferred it, and were loath to give it up.

This system of vast holdings of lands in the hands of a favored few naturally led to the development of a Dutch aristocracy in the Hudson River Valley, composed of a few families closely interrelated by marriage; such as Schuylers, Livingstons, Van Cortlandts, Van Rensselaers. The few given Christian names, appearing again and again in various branches of the same family, lead to confusion in the matter of tracing genealogy.

With the Hudson virtually the only highway of travel coming from the south, the population of Rensselaerwyck increased but slowly. In 1703, the Provincial Assembly passed the "Public Highways Act", providing for a Highway along the east side of the river extending from Kingsbridge on the outskirts of Manhattan to Albany. Even then, both settlers and traders preferred to go by water, as offering fewer difficulties. As late as the year 1767, a map of Rensselaerwyck shows no settlers on the site of the future Rensselaerville, the country being unpopulated except for roaming tribes of Indians from Stockbridge and Schoharie; good Indians, we are told, peaceably inclined towards the white man, having been converted to Christianity by the Reverend John Eliot, so that they refrained from hunting or fishing on the Sabbath. Their most-

travelled path in this region started on the Hudson River (at Lunenburg; afterwards Athens) following the valley of the Catskill Creek through the southwestern part of the township, being later the village of Preston Hollow, and on towards Schoharie. This road was crossed by one from Beaverdam (Berne).

The only trouble we hear about coming from the Indians occurred during the days of the American Revolution. Back in the year 1755, it will be recalled, England put the charge of Indian affairs in the hands of Sir William Johnson. He died in 1774; but his son, Sir John Johnson, siding with the Tories, carried on his leadership, and the Indians, especially the Mohawks, transferred their loyalty to him, and to Joseph Brant. The Oneidas, it is said, sided with the colonists.

The story goes that in the year 1780, the family of Jonathan Dietz, consisting of eight persons, were murdered by the Indians on their farm in Beaverdam; and some boys named Brice taken prisoners. At this same time, Michael Brant (who occupied a farm on Lot 225, later Rensselaerville) a German from Schoharie County, had gone to Catskill that day, leaving his family alone and unprotected. Returning, the Indians passed close by the Brant farmhouse, with their scalps, prisoners and plunder, but did not attack the Brants. This is believed to have been the nearest approach to Albany made by Indians at any time during the American Revolution. (See "The Captive Boys of Rensselaerville" by Josiah Priest).

There are other pre-revolutionary settlers of this district whose names have come down to us, commemorated in many instances by New York State Historical Markers. But to no great extent was the country populated; no deliberate movement made to open up the acreage of Rensselaerwyck that lay beyond the Helderberg till the close of the American Revolution. It was on the 4th day of September, 1783, that the Treaty of Paris was signed. Thereafter the good news spread that our wearied soldiers might lay down their arms, at last, for the peace with England had come.

CHAPTER II.

THE YOUNG LORD COMES OF AGE

ON the first day of November, 1764, in the city of New York, was born a very important little baby indeed: Stephen Van Rensselaer, fourth of the name; Fifth Lord of the Manor of Rensselaerwyck; and eighth (?) in line from its founder, Kilean, the earliest patroon. On his maternal side, baby Stephen was a grandson of Philip Livingston, a man of parts; being a New York City merchant with an establishment at the foot of Maiden Lane where he dealt in "Glass and furs, hardware and marble." He was also an active politician—and a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

People married young in those days; Stephen's mother, Catherine, had been only a girl in her 'teens. And now, within a year after the baby's birth, in 1765, the young family, together with retainers, started in a sloop up the river, a trip that lasted several days, for their new home. About a mile north of where the Capital at Albany now stands, a new manor house had just been completed, under the direction of a relative, General Abraham Ten Broeck, who had married a Van Rensselaer. The site was low land, being the alluvial flats of the Hudson, which bounded the property on the east. An oil painting of the old Manor House, as it appeared before it was remodelled to meet the changing of architectural tastes in the '40s, may be seen today in the gallery of the Albany Institute of Arts and Science. The artist, Thomas Cole of Catskill, showed a two storied structure and basement, with a 'stoop', painted buff and white. (Probably brick.) There was a garden; a lawn; with drooping willow trees. The house faced south, looking towards the Patroon's Creek a few hundred feet away, that turned the Patroon's Mill, and emptied its waters

into the Hudson. Nowadays, the Erie Canal and the D. & H. railroad tracks lie between the former Van Rensselaer tract and the River; and the Patroon's Creek, turned into a sewer, is covered over, flowing underground, east from North Pearl Street. Nothing is left of former glories; the Manor House itself was dismantled, carried off piecemeal, in the year 1895, and reconstructed in its own image and likeness to carry on an honored existence, being the Sigma Phi Fraternity House to-day at Williamstown, Mass. This because long before this date, the encroachments of business, plus railroad tracks, had destroyed effectually the old Van Rensselaer place as regards residence property. But old Albanians today recall the Manor House as it used to be; with the outbuildings, the stables, and the low brick offices, where the Van Rensselaer agents transacted the patroon's business, and the tenants came to pay their rents.

On July 12, 1782, the New York legislature put an end to 'entail' in the matter of inheritance. But this did not affect young Stephen's rights, because already, back in the year 1769, by reason of the untimely death of his father, the estate had become vested in the boy, then only five years old, who straightway became lord of the Manor of Rensselaerwyck. General Ten Broeck was appointed guardian for the lad's minority, and probably had almost everything to decide thereafter, as regard his ward's bringing up; all the more so, since the Widow Catherine, in 1775, took a new husband; a clergyman, "Dominie" Westerlo, straight from Holland; by whom she had a new family of children to engross her attention.

The boy's education was liberal; first, he attended school in Albany; then in Elizabethtown (afterwards, Elizabeth) New Jersey. From there, Kingston Academy. He entered Princeton, but on account of the war's coming too near, transferred to Harvard, where he graduated at the age of 18, in the class of 1782, with the degree of B.A. In less than a year he eloped, no less, with lovely "Peggy" (Margaret) Schuyler, daughter of General Philip Schuyler of Revolutionary fame. Only a year or so previously, Peggy's sister, Elizabeth, had become the bride of Alexander Hamilton, at a brilliant wedding held in the drawing rooms of the Schuyler Mansion, one of Albany's historic landmarks today.

The young couple, back from their honeymoon, all forgiven — and indeed, there was nothing against the marriage, on either side, except too much youth — settled down in the Manor House, according to the best manorial tradition, in style befitting their young proprietors' vast inheritance, which comprised many thousands of acres. In the year 1779, Rensselaerwyck had been divided into two districts; the one on the eastern side of the river, called Beverwyck; on the west, Watervliet.

On November 1st, 1785, Stephen Van Rensselaer came of age. The occasion was marked by great celebration at the Manor House in Watervliet, with all the countryside bidden to a huge 'beef and liquor' dinner, at which toasts were drunk, and speeches made, with all the tenantry cheering the young lord and his lady and wishing them and their increase a long and prosperous life. It was a memorable occasion, we may be sure. But we today are interested mainly in the event, because this was the time when young Stephen announced that his first move, now that he had reached his majority, would be to bring settlers to Rensselaerwyck. The land on either side of the river was to be surveyed and divided into tracts suitable for farms; and offered to homesteaders, free for the asking.

The announcement was well timed. The war was over, and the farms and villages in New England and eastern New York overrun with returned soldiers, who had no money; no land; without which, no way of making a living. And this was just what the young lord was proposing to give them — land; and the opportunity to make it their own. It is reasonable to surmise that the idea had been fostered by Stephen's guardian and trusted advisor, General Ten Broeck, and perhaps also by that very promising young lawyer and politician, Stephen's brother-in-law, Alexander Hamilton.

At all events, the first step was begun, being the survey, which was undertaken by one William Cockburn. His map, under date of 1786-87, apportions a tract to Rensselaerville (then a part of Watervliet) 6 miles on the north, $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles on the south; $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles on the east; being in the extreme south-western corner of Albany County, in the midst of the Helderberg mountains, which are a continuation of the Catskills. As to

the correct derivation of the name "Helderberg," this remains a moot question; some say it is "Helle-berg"—meaning Light Mountain; others say, Helder-berg means 'Mighty fortress'—plain as anything. It certainly must have appeared to prospectors as a well-nigh impregnable country; mountainous, rocky. Geologists today acclaim it as belonging to the Upper Silurian system; abounding in fossils—very interesting, indeed; only the early settlers, bearing axes, pickaxes and shovels, weren't interested in fossils, just then. They wanted land—for clearing—suitable for homesites, first of all.

There was lots of water; mountain streams, and water falls, promising vast hydraulic power to turn future mill-wheels. The country was covered with seemingly limitless forests and underbrush; there were no roads worthy of the name; once away from the water highways, progress must be made either on foot or a-horseback and pretty apt to be the former, in a day when horses were scarce—and expensive. Besides Catskill Creek, appeared its tributaries; Scrub, Ten Mile, Eight Mile; and Willow Brook. Certainly, the land suggested possibilities of rich farming soil and cattle-raising. The first comers, husky men, swung axes and felled the trees. All over the region, log cabins sprung up, almost overnight. Cockburn's survey of 1787 showed that 67 settlers already had commenced improvements and built log houses, on tracts assigned them. These farms were generally of 160 acres each.

We do not know—there is no way of telling—what oral representations were made to prospective settlers by the Van Rensselaer agents, by way of inducement. We only know that people came in, took possession of an allotted 'farm', and went to work getting it in shape to become productive. Later on—after a period of one year; or several years—a settler was given a paper beginning "This Indenture" between Stephen Van Rensselaer, Esq., Proprietor of the Manor of Rensselaerwyck, party of the first part, and John Doe, (the settler) of Rensselaerville, party of the second part . . . WITNESSETH, that the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, for and in consideration of the sum of Five shillings . . . " etc., etc. Followed a description of the assigned tract, giving number of lot, etc. set forth in longhand and then several square feet of

THIS INDENTURE, Made the *sixth* day of *May* one thousand

Five hundred & ninety three BETWEEN STEPHEN VAN RENSSELAER, Esquire, Proprietor of the Manor of Rensselaerwyck, in the Counties of Albany and Rensselaer,

in the State of New-York, of the first part; and *Simeon Holmes of Rensselaer* of the second part, WITNESSETH, That the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, for and in consideration of Five Shillings, to him in hand paid, by the said party of the second part, (the receipt whereof he doth hereby acknowledge) and also, for and in consideration of the Yearly Rents, Covenants, and Conditions, hereto after contained, on the part of the said party of the second part, *his* heirs, executors and administrators, to be paid, kept and performed, HATH granted, bargained, sold, remise, released and confirm, unto the said party of the second part, and to *his* heirs and assigns, ALL that FARM, piece or parcel of LAND, situate, lying and being in the Town of *Rensselaer* in the County of *Albany* within the said Manor of Rensselaerwyck

on the west side of Hudson River known & distinguished as Lot 10 Three hundred & twenty
via which said Lot begins at the north east corner of N° 352 a stake six links south west from a beech Co-
marked & marked 352. 353 375 376 & runs thence a long the bounds of N° 353 north eighty five degrees east for
one Chain & fifty links to the north east corner thereof a small beech cornered & marked 353. 354 376.
377 then north five degrees west forty Chains to a stake fifteen links south east from a beech Co-
marked & marked 376. 377. 399. 400 then south eighty five degrees west forty one Chains & twenty six links
to the north east corner of N° 375 a stake thirty links north east from a beech corner & marked 375. 376.
398 399 then along the bounds of N° 375 south five degrees east forty Chains to the place of the
gemma containing one hundred & sixty five and a half Acres of land

EXCEPTED ALWAYS, and RESERVED out of this present grant, unto the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs and assigns, all mines and minerals that now are or hereafter may be found in and upon the said farm, piece or parcel of land—and also, all creeks, kills, streams and runs of water, in and upon the said premises, together with the soil under the water; and the right, privilege and liberty of erecting, upon any part of the said hereby granted premises, such and so many mills and mill-dams, and such other works and buildings, for the convenient working of the said mines, and for the use of the said mills, as he the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs or assigns, shall and may think proper: AND ALSO, all such part of the said land as may, by the said dams, be overflowed with water; and also, all such wood, fire-wood and timber, as the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs and assigns, may find necessary, for building, repairing and accommodating the said mills, and for working and carrying on the said mines; and also, free liberty to dig, tree or use the ground, for either of the said purposes; and also, free ingress, egress and regress, way and passage, with his or their horses, cattle, carriages and servants, to, from, in and out of the said hereby granted premises; together with liberty to lay out roads, in any part or parts thereof, for the purposes aforesaid: The said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs and assigns, making such abatement for the land occupied or employed for all or any of the purposes aforesaid, in and out of the rent herein after reserved, as shall be judged reasonable and proportionate to the rent of the whole, by any two indifferent persons (one of whom to be chosen by the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs or assigns, and the other by the said party of the second part, *his* heirs or assigns) or by such third person as the said two persons, in case of disagreement between them, shall choose for umpire: TO HAVE AND TO HOLD, the said farm, piece or parcel of land, with all the appurtenances (except as herein before excepted) unto the said party of the second part, *his* heirs and assigns, to the only proper use and behoof of the said party of the second part, *his* heirs and assigns, for ever—YIELDING AND PAYING therefor, yearly and every year, during the continuance of this grant, unto the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs and assigns, the yearly rent of *Twenty eight Shillings* of good clean merchantable Winter Wheat, *& four bushels* (to be delivered at the now mansion-house of the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, in the town of Water-Vliet, unless specially directed by the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs, executors, administrators or assigns, to be delivered at some other place, not more than one mile distant from the said mansion-house, or the spot on which it is now erected) *& from one day's notice with receipt of money*—*The first payment to be made the first day of January in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred & ninety eight*

in each year: AND the said party of the second part, for *himself his* heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, do covenant, grant and agree, to and with the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs and assigns, That *he* the said party of the second part, *his* heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, will, from time to time, well and truly pay or cause to be paid unto the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs and assigns, the yearly rent above reserved, at the days and times and in manner aforesaid; and will also, well and truly discharge and pay all taxes, charges and assessments, ordinary and extraordinary, taxed, charged or assessed, and which may be hereafter taxed, charged or assessed to or upon the said hereby granted premises, or upon any part or parcel thereof, or upon the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs, executors, administrators or assigns, by any act of the legislature, or by county rates or otherwise howsoever, for or in respect of the said premises, or any part thereof, and indemnify the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, of, from and against any damages, costs and charges, which he or they or any of them may sustain or be put to by reason of any neglect in the due and punctual discharge and payment of the said taxes, charges and assessments: And the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, doth hereby further save and reserve unto himself, his heirs and assigns, the one equal *fourth* part of all purchase or consideration of money, or other things in lieu thereof, arising or that may arise by or from the selling, demising, assigning, or any how disposing of the premises hereby granted, or any part thereof, other than dispositions by devise and last will and testament, by the said party of the second part, *his* heirs, executors, administrators or assigns, and when and as often as the same shall be sold, demised, assigned or otherwise disposed of, other than dispositions by devise and last will and testament as aforesaid; And the said party of the second part, *he himself his* heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, do covenant, grant and agree to and with the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs and assigns, that he and they will well and truly pay or deliver unto the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs or assigns, the said one equal *fourth* part of the said monies or other things in lieu thereof, arising or which may arise by, from or out of every such sale, demise, assignment or other disposition aforesaid, other than dispositions by devise and last will and testament as aforesaid; and further, that prior to any such sale, demise, assignment or other disposition aforesaid, other than dispositions by devise and last will and testament as aforesaid, the said party of the second part, *his* heirs or assigns, shall and will make an offer, in writing, unto the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs or assigns, of the said premises, or of such part thereof, and for such estate therein, as the said party of the second part, *his* heirs or assigns, shall intend to dispose of, specifying the same, and the price, value or consideration, which *he* the said party of the second part, *his* heirs or assigns, is or are willing to take for the same; and if the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs or assigns, on his or their part, shall within twenty-one days, after such offer made as aforesaid, agree to take and accept the said premises, or the part thereof so offered, at the price, value or consideration specified in such offer, and shall within the same twenty-one days, pay or deliver such price, value or consideration (after deducting thereout the said one equal *fourth* part thereof, and the arrears of rent, (if any there be) unto the said party of the second part, *his* heirs or assigns; then and in such case, the said party of the second part, *his* heirs or assigns, shall and will forthwith, after such payment or delivery made, well and sufficiently convey and assure, unto the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs or assigns, the said premises, or the part thereof so offered, and for such estate therein as shall have been in that behalf specified. PROVIDED ALWAYS, that if the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs or assigns, shall not within the said twenty-one days, for that purpose limited, agree to take and accept the said premises, or the part thereof so offered as aforesaid, at such price, value or consideration as aforesaid, and shall not within the same twenty-one days, pay or deliver such price, value or consideration (after such deduction thereout as aforesaid,) unto the said party of the second part, *his* heirs or assigns, then it shall be lawful for the said party of the second part, *his* heirs or assigns, to sell, demise, assign, or otherwise dispose of the said premises, or the part thereof so offered, unto any person or persons whomsoever. PROVIDED NEVERTHELESS, and these Presents are upon this express Condition, That every sale, demise, assignment or other disposition, other than dispositions by devise or last will and testament as aforesaid, of the said premises hereby granted, or any part thereof, by the said party of the second part, *his* heirs or assigns, to any person or persons, other than to the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs or assigns, or other than by process or compulsion of law, for the consideration of money or other things in lieu thereof, shall be utterly void and of no effect in law or equity, unless such offer thereof shall have been made, and not accepted and complied with as aforesaid, and unless the said party of the second part, *his* heirs or assigns, or the person or persons to whom such sale, assignment, or other disposition shall have been made, except dispositions by devise or last will and testament as aforesaid, shall, within twenty-one days thereafter, well and truly pay or deliver unto the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs or assigns, the said one equal *fourth* part of the said price, value or consideration, for which the said premises or any part thereof, as the case may be, shall have been offered to the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs or assigns, together with all arrears of rent which may be then due: PROVIDED FURTHER, and these Presents are upon this further Condition, That every sale of the said premises or any part thereof, by his heirs or assigns, together with all arrears of rent which may be then due: PROVIDED FURTHER, and these Presents are upon this further Condition, That every sale of the said premises or any part thereof, by his heirs or assigns, off or sold by virtue of such process, to the said purchaser or purchasers. PROVIDED ALSO, and these presents are upon this further condition, that *he* the said party of the second part, *his* heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, do covenant, grant and agree, to and with the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs and assigns, that neither *he* the said party of the second part, nor *his* heirs or assigns, shall or will give or cause to be given, any manner of let, hindrance or obstruction whatsoever, to the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs or assigns, to the prejudice of any or either of them in the full enjoyment of all the rights, titles, privileges and easements, saved, reserved and excepted unto the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs and assigns, by the savings, reservations and exceptions in these presents contained. AND the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, for himself, his heirs and assigns, doth hereby covenant, grant and agree, to and with the said party of the second part, *his* heirs and assigns, that he, they and each of their parts, to be performed, each of them, paying the rents aforesaid, and performing, fulfilling and keeping all and singular the covenants, conditions and agreements herein contained, on his, their and each of their parts, to be performed, fulfilled and kept, shall and may lawfully, peaceably and quietly have, hold, possess, occupy and enjoy the premises hereby conveyed, and every part thereof, with the appurtenances (except as before excepted) unto the said party of the second part, *his* heirs and assigns, without any suit, trouble, eviction, hindrance, interruption or disturbance, of, by or from the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, or of, by or from any person or persons whomsoever lawfully claiming or to claim, by, from or under him, the said Stephen Van Rensselaer; and that he the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, and his heirs, shall and will hereby Warrant and Defend the said premises, to the said party of the second part, *his* heirs and assigns, against any person or persons lawfully claiming the same. PROVIDED always, nevertheless, that if it shall so happen that the rent above reserved, or any part thereof, shall be behind and unpaid by and for the space of Twenty-eight days next after the said days of payment, that then, and in every such case, it shall and may be lawful to and for the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs and assigns, or any of them, at the option of the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs or assigns, either to prosecute for the recovery of the same, in some court of record, or in person, or by his or their servant or servants, bailiff or bailiffs, into the whole or any part of the premises to enter, and there to distrain, and the distress so taken, to lead, drive and carry away, and the same to expose to sale at public vendue, and out of the monies therefrom arising to deduct the rent then due and in arrear, together with the costs and charges of distress and sale, and to return the overplus, if any there be, unto the said party of the second part, *his* heirs and assigns. AND provided further, and these presents and every thing herein contained are upon this express condition, that if it should at any time happen, that no sufficient distress can be found upon the premises, to satisfy such rent due and in arrear as aforesaid, or if either of the covenants and conditions herein before contained, on the part of the said party of the second part, *his* heirs and assigns, to be performed, fulfilled and kept, shall not be performed, fulfilled and kept, or shall be broken, then and in each, and every such case, and from thenceforth and at all times thereafter, it shall be lawful to and for the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs and assigns, or any of them, into the whole of the hereby granted premises or into any part thereof, in the name of the whole, to re-enter, and the same, as in his and their former estate, to have again, re-possess and enjoy; and the said party of the second part, *his* heirs and assigns, and all others, thereout and from thence utterly to expel put out and remove—and from and immediately upon such entry made, by the said Stephen Van Rensselaer, his heirs or assigns, these presents and every thing herein contained, shall cease, determine and become void and of no effect; This Indenture, or any thing herein contained to the contrary hereof, in any wise, notwithstanding. In Witness whereof, the parties hereunto their hands and seals have subscribed and set, the day and year first above written.

SEALED and DELIVERED, }
IN the PRESENCE.

LEASE OF LOT No. 376 on Cockburn Survey

(This lot was afterwards set off to Berne)

Dated May sixth, 1793

Between Stephen Van Rensselaer, Esq., and Simeon Holmes.

Reproduced by Courtesy of Miss Florence Peasley.

Stephen Van Rensselaer

Simeon Holmes

closely printed legal verbiage, which probably few of the settlers ever read, and still fewer would have understood the import, if they had.

We can visualize conditions of an actual signing: young John Doe, called in from his plough and confronted by an officious agent of the Van Rensselaer interests, who brought a lease all complete except for the signature of the tenant. We can imagine the agent's glib assurances as to the insignificance of the landlord's reservations of "mineral rights", etc., "also all creeks, kills, streams and runs of water." . . . (Oh, don't worry your head about that!" quoth the agent. "It's just the usual formality in all indentures. . . . Here you are—sign here!" . . . indicating an X at the bottom of the paper. . . . "Well, now that's done; I congratulate you, Mr. Doe, on securing such a fine inheritance for your children, and your children's children. Good-day."

The earliest leases of lots numbered 54, 94, and 134, down in the region of Preston Hollow, appear under date of September 10th, 1787. Other early leases are of Lot 108 to Lawrence Falk, on September 6th, 1793; Lot 193, March 3rd, 1795, to Gershon and Esra Wilmot. (Note: this lease has come down to Miss Alice Chadwick from her ancestors.); Lot 376 to Simeon Holmes, May 6th 1793, being the lease of "the Peasley farm", just over the borderline in Berne; the document copied for this work, by courtesy of Miss Florence Peasley. Other leases still extant in Rensselaerville are those of the Conkling Farm—Lot 270, under date of January 24th, 1796, now owned and occupied by a descendant of the original grantee, Mrs. Lewis Eldridge; likewise, lease (Lot 312) to Garrit Barrickman, in hands of Mr. James Rider.

There were estimated 1397 farms in Albany County, 1600 in Rensselaer. And Cheney's "Anti-Rent Movement".

"With the exception of a few farms leased for 60 years, the leases were all perpetual. Terms were 10-14 bushels annually of wheat per 100 acres; 4 fat hens; and service of men with horse and wagon one day per year. By early custom, fowls and labor were commuted for a load of wood, delivered at the house, or \$2.00 in money. The annual yearly rent for a

farm seldom amounted to more than \$25, and sometimes less.”
 (Wheat valued at \$1.35 a bushel).

Thus: Wheat -----	\$26.66
Day's work -----	2.00
4 fat fowles -----	.50
	<hr/>
	\$29.16

But :

“The ‘sale’ was an incomplete transfer, which left certain claims in the hands of the original owner. The tenant got title only to rough land; he created farm for himself, and if he sold it, one-third or one quarter of the sum received had to be turned over to the landlord. If he defaulted in his rent, the landlord could step in and sell the property. The landlord reserved all the ‘water rights’ and ‘mineral rights’; and the tenant was enjoined against ‘waste.’ . . . The old commonlaw remedies of ‘distress’ and ‘eviction’ for non-payment of rent were to remain in full force.”

And these leases were to run forever.

In retrospect, it seems incomprehensible any settlers could be so blind. Even a superficial survey of the terms of these wordy, windy confusing “Indentures” (which may or may not have been the product of the brain of Alexander Hamilton, Esq., one of the brightest of bright young men of his time) might have given ground for pause; made the tenants wonder as to what they were letting themselves in for.

But seemingly, none of them had any qualms. They came, they saw, they conquered the wilderness; and sent back word home to family and friends, to come and do likewise. Here, in the little rapidly growing settlement beyond the Helderberg, lay opportunity for all—this was the promised land.

Sent from a note of two days later on May 18th 1880.
 John A. Foster
 Oxford, December 1889

A. Near the the Mobile Hill
B. The Archway House
C. The Lower Hill
D. The Park-Hill
E. The house in which James Carson resides
F. John Cook's Establmnt. They
M. A. Tommison's Mill for making mill
The red numbers & figures refer to the page
the Fieldbook





CATALPA HOUSE—1939.

(Built by Franklin Frisbie. . . . For many years the Chadwick residence.)
Reproduced by permission of Miss Alice Chadwick

CHAPTER III.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN

WITH the increase of population, Rensselaerwyck was divided into Watervliet and Beverwyck using the Hudson as a boundary line. In 1790 part of Watervliet was cut off to make Rensselaerville; and in 1795, part of Rensselaerville was taken off for Berne; and in 1815, another slice for Westerlo. At the first New York state constitutional convention held in Kingston in 1777, the state was divided into counties; each county governed by a board of supervisors elected for two years; a supervisor to each town.

In 1795, at Rensselaerville's first town meeting, the chief subject of discussion was road building. But the results were of local effect only; nothing was really done to connect the new settlement with the main arteries of travel beyond the Helderberg until the state took a hand. In 1789, the New York legislature had voted 50,000 acres of public land to compensate persons opening new roads or building bridges. \$15,000 resulted from lotteries held to meet the expenses of highways. Roads known as "Turnpikes"—being highways built by private companies, incorporated under the laws of the state—had toll gates every ten miles, through which the traveller passed, upon payment of the established charge.

In 1802, the Athens & Schoharie Turnpike was incorporated; and ran through Preston Hollow. In 1803, came the Albany & Delaware Turnpike, running directly through the village of Rensselaerville (see map of 1829). This was the stage road for many years. By 1813, there were five or six turnpikes touching Rensselaerville; covering a distance of 40 miles; with four toll gates collecting annually the sum of \$1142. In 1849, Rensselaerville was "located at the junction of Albany & Delaware and Greenville Turnpikes." (Munsell.)

Early Rensselaerville began as a pioneer settlement, and there were few white collar jobs. The men worked as farmers;

tanners; stockraisers; millers and did whatever there was to be done. And likewise the women worked, at the traditional jobs of womankind. They were housewives, first of all; but on a very broad scale, indeed. They not only cooked and sewed and raised children; they wove, spun, made clothes for their entire household, right on the place, with the help of other housewives. There were visiting tailoresses who came with their shears (the present writer had a great grandmother of this useful calling) and cut out the men's clothes, in a workmanlike way. There were school teachers; there were nurses, midwives, much needed indeed, in those day of frequent child-bearing—and the doctor so far away. There were a few professional men—medical and legal. The occupation of general storekeeper was usually combined with that of postmaster.

Incident to travel, came the business of catering to the traveller. Taverns sprung up along the highways, and did an enormous business, especially among the cold and thirsty farmer guests taking their produce to market. Every tavern sold spiritous liquors; and in 1820, Asa Colvard's distillery in Westerlo put out some 11,000 barrels of whisky. Comments John Preston, who evidently had an understanding heart:

"The laboring class of people in cold and changeable climates have a natural inclination for using diffusable stimulants and it is vain to strive for a suppression of that use other than to prescribe preventives and substitutes less deleterious than ardent spirits."

The beginnings of common school education for all classes began in 1795, with the state legislature voting 1590 pounds to be divided among the several towns of Albany County. In 1819, a 'rate bill' was passed, providing that only patrons of a school paid for the support of that school. By 1829, Rensselaerville had 19 school districts, with an attendance of 1061 children between the ages of 5 and 16; absolutely free education not provided until 1867; after the civil war. Small private schools were very common, and of course, unstandardized; the quality of instruction depending upon the calibre of the individual teacher, who might be a scholarly clergyman, or only a pert young miss who had never herself progressed beyond what we would call today 'primary grade.'

Map of ALBANY COUNTY

1829

By David Burr
Published by Surveyor General of
New York State,
Pursuant to Act of Legislature.
(New York Public Library)

Note: Lots are numbered according to
Cockburn Survey. (Year 1786-87) The
Van Rensselaer Manor House is indicated
on the bank of the Hudson River, just
outside the City of Albany, in the Town-
ship of Watervliet. The Patroon's Creek
flows directly on the south, into the river
on the east.



Books were scarce; and reverently treasured; read and re-read. The early Federal Library was open, it appears, only four days a year for the exchange of books; selection thus became a serious and momentous matter, unlike our present-day practice of taking home an armful of mystery stories to be skimmed over the weekend.

The original settlers had been mainly poor;—but within less than a generation, many of them had become well-to-do; even rich. The log cabins had made way for beautiful frame houses (see William Keller's "White Pine" booklet, showing views of early American homes bordering the village street). Rensselaerville ladies now had carpets; mahogany furniture; silver tea sets and fine china. The sons of pioneer fathers now went off to college; the daughters took music lessons on rose-wood pianos that somehow had been transported over the Helderberghs; sometimes they too, went away to school—to Albany, Pittsfield, or even to Boston and New York. Girls, as well as boys, were held to warrant an education, especially as a preparation for school teaching. The cost of education—even higher education—seems very moderate, for the original prospectus, dated September 1826, of Rensselaer School at Troy (afterwards Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute) sets forth:

"A student of strict prudence may pay all his expenses for the 42 weeks in each year, at this branch, with \$120, as follows: Tuition, \$21; board, \$63; fuel and lights, \$10; washing and lodging \$10; text books \$6; amusement apparatus \$10.

Old Rensselaerville rejoiced in what must have been a very delightful social life indeed, from all that has come down to us of the parties and dances, suppers and merrymakings, of all sorts and descriptions. Even the war of 1812, though it drew temporarily a number of beaux away from the town that winter, could not altogether have dampened the social spirit, for in March 1812 a lady in Lansingburgh, N. Y., wrote to her forlorn young brother at the time stationed in Madison Barracks:

"Sybil is still with me, but she finds it so dull compared with a gay place like Rensselaerville, that I cannot hope to keep her here much longer."

CHAPTER IV

THE CHURCH — AND THE CHURCHES

“By schisms rent asunder,
By heresies distressed.”

FROM the earliest beginnings of Rensselaerville, the scattered settlers were proffered a choice of religious faiths.

If anybody in those days rashly ventured the suggestion of a “Community Church”, with everybody uniting to worship a common deity, it must have been as a voice crying in the wilderness, that history does not record.

There is abundance of evidence to show that adherents of several denominations appeared almost simultaneously upon the scene; as to which was actually first, is a moot question. Confusion has sometimes come about from the use of ‘first’; signifying the date of group organization? Or the date when the completed edifice was dedicated to the Lord? And when they say “Rensselaerville”, does it mean village . . . or township?

Be that as it may, on the word of Mrs. Washbon, the palm of priority should be handed to the Baptists.

“Elder Mudge, a convert from Shakerism, was the first preacher. He travelled from house to house where there were but few settlers. His successor, Elder Everett, was a preacher of some celebrity, and an indefatigable laborer.”

She states that the first Baptist congregation in the town was in Preston Hollow, under Elder Winans; but they had no place of worship until 1821, although their organization dated to about 1790. There was no Baptist meeting house actually in the village of Rensselaerville until the one built on the Plank Road in 1830. Elders Beman and Crocker were in charge of this Society for many years. According to the “Gazeteer” of J. H. French (1860) a Baptist Church was



REVEREND SAMUEL FULLER
From an old portrait by an unknown artist.
It has hung in the vestry room of
Trinity Church since early days.

formed at Rensselaerville in 1797, with Treman Beman the first pastor . . . Mrs. Washbon at her time of writing (1873) said that the Baptists were then the largest numerically of any religious group in town.

The Quakers were likewise early in the field, having three meeting houses, in or near the town; one located at Smith's Corners. There was a Friends Meeting House at Potter Hollow in 1818.

The Dutch Dutch Reformed Society had a meeting house in Oak Hill in 1795. (Washbon.)

"Rev. Mr. Van Zandt and Rev. Mr. Ostrander, ministers. In lease of lot 9 to Charles Ostrander, dated 1795, one acre was reserved for the purpose of erecting a Dutch Reformed Church."

The Methodists: (Washbon.)

"The first Methodists here were a family by the name of Abel. They lived north of the village, which accounts for their meeting house on the knoll of Mr. Crocker's house, on Lot 268. After a few years, it was moved down opposite the cemetery, and finally to a new building in the village in 1839." Mr. Mark Golden was secretary of the Methodist parish for a number of years in its latter days.

The Presbyterians: (Washbon.)

"The year 1793 was noted for the first and only Presbyterian organization in town, in connection with the Northern Associated Presbytery."

The Reverend Samuel Fuller was the first Presbyterian pastor. The outstanding facts in the life of this clergyman, who founded two churches, and was an outstanding figure in Rensselaerville for fifty years, are given on the authority of his son, also a Reverend Samuel Fuller. (See pamphlet entitled: "Two Sermons preached in Trinity Church, Rensselaerville, on Sunday, April 24th, 1842, on the death of its Founder and First Rector, the Reverend Samuel Fuller, who died on the ninth, in the 75th year of his age, and the 50th of his ministry, by his son, the Rev. Samuel Fuller, Rector of Christ Church, Andover.")

Dr. Fuller was born at Stafford, Tolland County, Conn., on the 21st day of September, 1767. He suffered a 'long and

dangerous illness' prior to entering as a sophomore at Dartmouth, in the year 1788; lost a year from smallpox, and graduated, with a B.A. degree, in 1791. On the 11th day of November, 1792, he married Ruth, daughter of Dr. Edward Pond, Woodbury, Conn.

He first came to Rensselaerville, alone, on April 9th, 1793; probably travelling on horseback. On Sunday, April 14th, he made the following entry in his Journal:

"This is a new settlement, and they have no meeting house. The trustees applied to me to preach for them three Sabbaths longer, which I agreed to do."

At that time, the real village of Rensselaerville lay some two miles away to the southwest of the later center of population in the valley of Ten Mile Creek. Mr. Fuller's first home was at Stephen Callendar's, on West Street, east of Fox Creek. In June, he moved to Dr. John Frisbie's on "Pisgah" (where Dr. Frisbie and his brother had a store) later known as "Meeting House Hill." He was charged 7/ a week board for himself; 5/ for horse. We learn of his suffering an attack of fever and ague, that lasted all summer. (Note: The location of Dr. Frisbie's place may be found on Town Map of year 1854; lot 285; under name of its then occupant, Rufus Bouton.)

The following November, he received a call to the pastorate on the basis of 100 pounds settlement, and fifty pounds annually, for five years; after that, it was to be increased five pounds a year until it amounted to 80 pounds. They paid him the 100 pounds settlement by purchasing and deeding to him and his heirs forever, the south half (80 acres) of Lot 227; on condition that he should remain their pastor for five years. (He stayed with them for seventeen.)

He was ordained on Thursday, January 23rd, 1794; by the Reverend Mr. Judson; the service taking place in what was then the meeting house, standing in the southwest corner of what was afterwards Mr. Fuller's orchard. (Later Mr. William Aley's.) This original house of worship had been a two-room dwelling, built of logs, in the primitive architectural style. By taking out the partition, and likewise the chimney; using this space for a pulpit on the west side, this crude

	ALBANY CITY	BENNE	BETHLEHEM	COEYMANS	CULDERLAND	KNOX	NEW SCOTLAND	RENSSELAER	WATERVLIET	WESTERLO
When incorporated	1686	1795	1793	1791	1803	1822	1852	1790	1788	1815
Improved Acres										
Unimproved										
Horses & Mules	1029	1175	841	768	746	1277	780	385	1,343	991
Veal-Cattle	325	3624	1820	2638	1850	3381	1650	3830	2,225	3,505
Sheep	175	2442	5605	4032	4666	8628	4841	8252	3564	6875
Swine	2978	3,941	14661	3243	2400	2,908	2,867	4162	3345	4445
Wheat	184	1842	2,516	2,949	1,962	2,943	2,767	2,316	3,083	3,924
Barley		4172	136	398	1,107	6,416	206	3,336	1,350	2,867
Oats	4200	2515	6319	3326	4177	15,565	56,841	12,406	61,513	60,910
Rye	2170	7896	22700	2128	3214	9,405	23,115	8,744	15,251	4,589
Buckwheat	1272	7296	4213	11,276	9,556	11,810	3200	21,342	29,594	9,944
Indian Corn	3600	4176	16,600	18,335	21,960	4,401	18,130	12,232	16,025	11,112
Wool	675	20387	2643	8213	2506	16,816	3,808	4214	7750	11,913
Bush Potatoes	7800	7845	13,410	2687	5279	6783	4494	13,651	65,922	55,542
Dry Hay	700	1191	5914	4968	3339	4863	5060	5398	5192	6078
Product of Dairy		15648	13,320	10,847	12,834	10,265	13,500	13,713	18,619	13,331
Orchard		3475	1635	4780	3935	2768	4390	4390	2960	1679
Arboreal Stores	976	9	1	15	15	6	14	21	94	8
Capital invested	925000	23000	6000	23000	14500	10,800	11,450	49,550	100,853	11,300
Population	50763	3441	4102	3250	3279	2021	3439	3621	16,675	2,567

TOWNSHIP OF RENSSELAERVILLE
1854

Taken from Map of Albany County from actual survey by
JAY GOULD, of Roxbury, N. Y.
September 6th, 1854.
Reproduced by permission of
The New York Historical Society.



Entered according to act of Congress in the year 1854
by Robert Pearsall Smith in the Clerk's Office of the Dist. Court
of the Eastern Dist. of Pennsylvania

structure answered the purpose. There was no heating supplied, of course; and the story comes down that on the day of ordination, the snow drifted through the cracks in the walls, and moistened the hands of Mr. Judson, the officiating clergyman, so that his fingerprints remained on the pages of the Bible used, ever after.

In the following month, February, Mr. Fuller went to Connecticut to fetch his family; wife, baby and sister-in-law. (The daughter, Harriet, subsequently became the second Mrs. Ezra Lester; the sister-in-law, Martha (Patty) Pond married Josiah Conkling.) The trip was made travelling with two sleighs; crossing the mighty Hudson, frozen into solid ice at that time of year; and goodness knows how many other minor streams and brooks that lay between Rensselaerville and Woodbury. The only safe time to travel in those times was the winter, avoiding the dangers incident to crossing rivers or getting mired in the mud. This time, however, all went well; and we may be sure that the anxious congregation were relieved when the Fullers arrived, without mishap.

From February 8th to April 10th of that year, the clergyman's family shared the two-room log house of Mr. Samuel Nichols (Lot 204); and we can't help wondering how even the godliness of the clergyman's young wife was sufficient to sustain her. The Fullers—father, mother, baby (we are not just sure about sister-in-law)—had one room, all to themselves; boasting one window, with four lights (not window-panes of glass, then unobtainable; the openings were stuffed with paper). This apartment truly appears not to have been over-sized, for we learn that after the meal was cleared away, they set the table on top of the bed to make more space. One can fondly picture Ruth, the mother, trying to keep the baby quiet, and not disturb father, who had retired to his 'study'—in a corner of the room, where he composed his Sunday's sermon, writing on a desk devised from a stave and a barrel.

We are somewhat relieved (and we know they must have been) that in the spring, the Fullers moved from Mr. Nichol's to the middle room of what was later the Mulford house, in the village.

The site chosen for the building of the first Presbyterian Church was upon the hill, nearly a mile from the Fuller farm, and near the later Rufus Bouton place. The location assured a gorgeous view into the mountains, looking across into four states. The frame of the building as erected on the 15th of June, 1796; and the first service held September 11th, of the same year. Of simple design, the new church had neither 'steeple, tower, turret or bell'; but it had a pulpit, which after all was the main thing; especially in those days when what a congregation expected was preaching—and plenty of it.

Somebody remarked of the pioneer settler that he "had only two places to go; to mill and to meetin'" and his women folk seldom had more than the one—"to meetin'." Sunday represented the high spot of the week for matron and maid; the occasion when all got together, in demurely festal array, to attend divine service followed by a pleasant social hour, visiting one's friends. Two services were held, morning and afternoon, with an intermission for lunch. In the earliest days, there were no carriages; the men rode horseback, with the ladies behind, riding on a pillion.

The Presbyterian Church flourished and grew in strength and numbers till the original membership of three persons had grown to 101. Then Rev. Samuel Fuller announced to his congregation one Sunday morning from the pulpit that he was constrained to resign from that society, and take orders in the Episcopal Church, which he straightway did. Of this, more anon.

To continue with the Presbyterians; they carried on thereafter, with a succession of pastors. (The present scribe regrets her inability to get adequate information.) The most important fact is the decision of the Presbyterian congregation, in the summer of 1813, to move the church building nearer the village, owing to the trend of population that way, where all the mills and manufactures were located, requiring water power. Daniel Conklin, Nicholas Cornell, and Deacon Woodford were active in raising funds for the cost of the wood needed for the new building. Deacon Woodford went to Albany to solicit subscriptions; the estimate had been \$600; twice the sum had been already spent, and the congregation

were already \$190 in debt. The Deacon preached in the city—and being without a license, he was taken to the mayor. It is pleasant to record that His Honor, hearing the Deacon's story, not only released him, but gave him a subscription.

The new church building, which continues an honored existence today, as the Union School, in the original site on West Street—over the bridge and up the hill on your right—was dedicated on September 10th, 1813. But eventually this location also was found unsatisfactory, being too far from the centre of things, so in the summer of 1842, foundations were laid for a new building, designed by the architect, Ephraim Russ, on Main Street. It was dedicated on December 6th, 1843. (We refer you to a copy—if you can get a chance to see one—of the Historical Sermon preached in the Presbyterian Church, Rensselaerville, N. Y., on July 2nd, 1876, by Rev. John O. Gordon.)

Now, as to the Episcopalians—their history properly begins with the ordination, on October 2nd, 1810, by Bishop Moore, of Samuel Fuller, “now 43 years of age, in the prime of life.”

Says Dr. Frederick S. Sill, in his “Sketch of Trinity Church, Rensselaerville, for its Centennial History, 1811”:

“He (Samuel Fuller) returned the same month to Rensselaerville, and on October 21st, 1810, held the first Episcopal service there, in the house of Mr. Charles Pierson, a former Presbyterian parishioner . . . On October 1st, 1811, he was ordained Priest by Bishop Hobart. . . . The first communion service was celebrated on November 15th, 1812, with nine communicants, four men and five women. The corner stone of the present church was laid August 1st, 1814; designed by Ephraim Russ; consecrated by Bishop Hobart, on a second visitation, October 24th, 1815. The original subscriptions were \$2000; at the time the contract was made; later, \$900 completed the cost.

Samuel Fuller was married twice; first, on November 11th, 1792, to Ruth Pond, who died February 13th, 1813; and secondly to Flora Backus, who survived.” (Note: afterwards married Dr. Zina Lay. Died Nov. 12th, 1851.)

Dr. Fuller extended his ministerial services throughout

the community, and founded the Episcopal Church in Greenville (this in Greene County). For 15 years, Trinity Church in Rensselaerville was the only Episcopal Church in the county, outside of the city of Albany itself.

(See appendix for subsequent church history)



Stephen Van Rensselaer

STEPHEN VAN RENSSELAER, the 4th
1764-1839
(The Last Patroon)
From an old print.

CHAPTER V.

THE ANTI-RENT WAR

ON the 26th day of January, 1839, Stephen Van Rensselaer, Proprietor of Rensselaerwyck, died at the Manor House at Watervliet, in the 75th year of his age; sincerely mourned in death as he had been beloved in life. Gordon's Gazetteer of New York (1838) pointed out to the intending visitor to Albany:

"Upon the northern banks of the city is the neat and beautifully situated mansion of Stephen Van Rensselaer, Esq., the Patroon of the Manor of Rensselaerwyck. The name of this gentleman can scarcely be mentioned without a passing tribute to his merit. Blessed with great wealth, which so frequently leads to selfish egotism and exclusiveness, he has through life been distinguished as an active and efficient public man—bestowing his personal services and his fortune to the encouragement of every species of improvement, in literature, science and art. His name as a benefactor is associated with most of the charitable and scientific institutes of the state, and he has perhaps done more than any other citizen to foster agriculture and internal improvements."

In the course of his long life, Stephen Van Rensselaer had seen many changes; the United States had become a nation, with a population increasing by leaps and bounds. He had watched the spread of democracy; universal manhood established in New York State, and slavery abolished. He had borne the expense of the geological and agricultural survey that led to the opening of the Erie Canal in 1823. He had seen the Hudson River passenger sloop give way to the Steamboat; his influence and his money had helped establish the "Mohawk and Hudson Railroad running between Albany and Schenectady". In 1824, he founded Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, a

school primarily for the training of teachers for instructing the sons and daughters of farmers and mechanics in the application of science to the common purposes of life.

He had served in his state legislature; he had been Lieutenant Governor. In the War of 1812, he had been appointed as Commander of the Volunteer Militia by Governor Tompkins; but resigned in disgust when his troops declined to cross the St. Lawrence River into Canada, on the ground that being militia men, a war of invasion was outside their province.

As sole heir to Rensselaerwyck—that as estimated comprised some 726,000 acres; divided after the Revolution into farms, 1397 in Albany County, 1600 in Rensselaer, leased to tenants on an annual rental—he was an enormously rich man. But money itself did not interest him, except as a means to do good; his business affairs were relegated to the management of his agents and legal representatives, who spared him the burden, leaving the owner free to concentrate on the things in life that seemed to him worthwhile. He was generous to a fault; impulsive, warm-hearted. In the Memorial Service held on the 15th of April subsequent to Stephen Van Rensselaer's death, at the Albany Institute of which he had been the founder, the speaker of the evening, Daniel Barnard said:

“ it is nearly certain that he fed more that were hungry, warmed more that were cold, clothed more that were naked, covered more heads that were shelterless, dried up more bitter tears and comforted more despairing hearts than any other man living among us in his time.”

In a preceding chapter, we have spoken of the system of land ownership in Rensselaerwyck, under which the grantee—the “party of the second part”—took title, but with certain feudal obligations, certain irksome restrictions. Within a very few years after these leases were signed, sealed, and delivered, a considerable group of the tenants woke up to the situation, and became dissatisfied. Gradually they got wind of other lands, in Ohio and Pennsylvania and farther west, available to settlers, who would be given downright ownership. As early as 1811, a petition was presented to the legislature asking for a commission of representatives for both landlords and

tenants; the object being to do away with this perpetual landlord-and-tenant system; but nothing came of it. We do not know whether any direct appeal was ever made to the Patroon himself; but it is hard to believe that he could remain oblivious to the festering discontent about him. Tales have come from the early days when Squire Van Rensselaer drove down the Albany Road into Rensselaerville in his coach and four, guarded on either side by outriders against the dangers of somebody taking a 'pot shot' at him from the bushes.

However, no serious outbreak appears to have occurred during the Patroon's lifetime; it seems as if the tenants had decided to bide their time, on the possibility that his will would straighten things out. But when its provisions were made known, it must have served as a disappointment. A copy of this lengthy document, neatly done in long hand, may be seen today in the files of the Surrogate's Office in Albany. It was executed some two years before the testator died—dated the 18th of April, 1837; and there is every probability it was drawn in the offices of Messrs. Jenkins & Cooper of Albany, who were lawyers for the Van Rensselaer estate.

Stephen Van Rensselaer died leaving numerous descendants to be provided for—including a widow (his second wife) and nine children—six sons and three daughters. The youngest son, Westerlo,—named after the testator's stepfather—was not yet of age.

Subject to the widow's dower right, the bulk of the real estate was devised to the two eldest sons; the West Manor (Watervliet) to Stephen (whose mother had been Margaret Schuyler); the East Manor (Beverwyck) to William (son of Cornelia Paterson.) The widow and the sons already of age were named Trustees.

Clause VII of the Will provided:

"I give and bequeath all the arrearages of rent which may be due and owing to me in the Manor of Rensselaerwyck on the first day of January and February preceding my death, and also all promissory notes which may have been taken for rents to (naming trustees) in trust that they may collect the said arrearages, etc with all reason-

able indulgences to the persons so indebted to me who are poor or otherwise unfortunate, and apply the monies when collected to the payment of my just debts, etc. . . . and in case the monies so collected shall not be sufficient I hereby charge my real estate in the said Manor of Rensselaerwyck devised to my said sons, Stephen and William, with the deficiency."

It thus devolved upon the executors and trustees to balance the budget; as the kindly, benevolent testator had never himself undertaken to do in his life time. Furthermore, when all returns were in, if funds were lacking to cover all debts, legacies, and benefactions under the will, it was up to the two eldest sons to make up the deficit.

Investigation showed that some \$400,000 was owing to the testator; the problem being how to collect it. Likewise, it was found that Stephen Van Rensselaer himself died owing a goodly amount. In the face of bombardment on every side from people wanting their money—heirs, legatees, beneficiaries and creditors—we can hardly wonder that the harassed trustees, and even more perhaps their legal representatives, Messrs. Jenkins & Cooper, whose job it was,—were more immediately exercised over the clause about collection of "Said arrearages" than with its qualifying provision as to "reasonable indulgences."

Alexander Hamilton had been dead over a quarter of a century; killed in 1804 by Aaron Burr's bullet, on the heights of Weehawken. But his work lived after him; the lease form, firm and impregnable, signed by both landlord and tenant, but cunningly contrived to throw every advantage on the side of the landlord. The tenant, who had taken a tract of land where perhaps no white man's foot had ever trod, cut down the trees, made a clearing, put up buildings and increased the value of the ground a thousand fold, was bound to turn over to the landlord one quarter (or maybe even one-third) of any sum he might realize on sale of the property. Furthermore, the innocent purchaser of a Rensselaerwyck 'farm' was obligated to pay any accumulation of back rents piled up by previous tenants. Either pay . . . or else be ousted from the premises, leaving his goods behind him. There were

also sundry minor restrictions in the leases which, if they had ever been enforced (as to the prohibition against 'waste'—and erection of mill dams, etc., etc.) would have effectually kept the tenants from getting any good out of their premises at all.

The old Patroon was gone. Now, it remained to see what his heirs were going to do; and accordingly, on the 22nd of May following the death, a deputation of tenants from East Berne, headed by one Van Duzen, called upon Mr. Stephen Van Rensselaer, inheritor of West Manor, at his home in Watervliet, to present their requests. In effect, they wanted to know on what terms they might come to own their homes outright.

Mr. Van Rensselaer refused to receive them; sent out word he would send a reply, later. And when it came, it was an absolute refusal to make any compromise whatsoever.

If the new proprietor stood by his guns, so did his tenants, likewise. On the Fourth of July following,—Independence Day—a mass meeting was held at Berne, resulting in the foundation of an "Anti-Rent Society," with a membership recruited from all Rensselaerwyck. From that day forward, the movement spread like wildfire; everybody took sides, for or against the Van Rensselaers. In the village of Rensselaerville, it would seem that none of the actual residents was personally affected; the probability is that village lot-holders had been placed on a different footing; given their deeds outright. However, many of these villagers had relatives and friends on outlying farms, who were in the forefront of the battle, with everything they had in the world at stake. The fact that a fellow townsman, Jonathan Jenkins, Esq., had been counsel for Stephen Van Rensselaer, since the early days when they met in the Albany legislature; and was now succeeded by his son, Charles M. Jenkins—all this brought the controversy very close to home. The law was clearly on the landlord's side; so had it been on the side of the British, on the occasion of the Boston Tea Party. A certain element among the citizens naturally preferred to play safe—and keep out of trouble. The story has been handed down of an honest storekeeper in Rensselaerville who had expressed disapproval of the Anti-

Rent agitation; and even more, of the Anti-Rent agitators. One morning a short time afterwards, on visiting his barn, he discovered his cows' tails cut off—and left hanging, torn and bleeding over their stalls—at the hands of persons unknown.

The months went by; and the Van Rensselaers became impatient for their rents, which plainly were not forthcoming. On the 16th of October of that same year, the Sheriff of Albany County with three deputies set out on the road leading across the Helderberg, armed with writs of ejectment to be served upon the refractory tenants. At Reidsville, they were met by a crowd of seventy to one hundred farmers, disguised it is said, as "Calico Indians," who seized the law papers and burned them up straightway in a flaming tarbarrel. A second attempt the following month met with no better results. And a third undertaking, early in December, encountered an assemblage of some 1500 men about a mile from Reidsville, to halt the sheriff's advance.

Three times and out! Governor Seward did the only thing he could do, in the premises, looking to maintain law and order; he ordered out the militia, to leave immediately for the scene of disorder. At that, the more sober minded element among the "Anti-Renters" realized it was time to call off resistance—temporarily—and sent a copy of their communication to Sheriff Michael Artcher, at the Headquarters of the Militia, being the home of Judge John Niles in Rensselaerville.

When the legislature opened in January the next year, a petition was presented, craving action on behalf of the tenants. Nothing came of it then; but the matter had now been brought out into the open, and the issue recognized. In the Senate, on March 14th, the Governor read a message relative to the difficulties in the Manor of Rensselaerwyck; the uprising which had necessitated the calling out of the militia who had been forced to tramp across the Helderberg in the wintry snow and sleet—at a cost to the state of some several thousand dollars.

In 1841, the sheriff undertook to evict tenants who had not paid their rent. He must have found the task an ungrate-

ful one; even when he encountered no active hostility, the sympathy of the countryfolk was always for their poor neighbor; and nobody would bid on the seized property when it was put up for auction.

Public opinion was now thoroughly aroused; petitions flooded the legislature, demanding the destruction of the established leasehold system. The Van Rensselaers, alarmed, offered compromises; but their offers came too late. The tenants who might at first have been satisfied with an inch, were now determined to take an ell; and had concluded that the quickest course was the formation of an Anti-Rent Party, that should elect their own legislature. In 1844, a Constitutional Convention was called; and the following year, saw the first issue of a weekly publication in Albany, called the "The Freeholder," consecrated to the Anti-Rent cause. It was widely circulated throughout the country; a back file is available (1939) in the Rensselaerville Library, and affords interesting sidelights on the temper of those troublous times. Paid advertisements in the columns of "The Freeholder" by leading merchants and professional men of the village of Rensselaerville and other hamlets of the township indicate the trend of popular sympathy.

The Constitutional Convention of 1846 abolished 'feudal tenure'; likewise perpetual leases, thereafter restricting agricultural leases to a duration of not over twelve years. In case of non-payment of rent, the landlord was allowed to put the tenant out of possession (eviction) but could no longer hold his goods. (distrain.) A few years after, the "quarter sale" provision was disallowed, by the Court of Appeals.

In the year 1853, Stephen Van Rensselaer, of the West Manor, weary of litigation, perhaps, sold out all his claims to back rents, etc., to one Colonel Walter Church, for 50-60 cents on the dollar. Colonel Church promptly started to pursue these claims; and became a party to some 2000 lawsuits on account of Rensselaerwyck property. The New York Reports for the Eighteen-fifties are full of these cases; "C. M. Jenkins for the Appellant"—or, it might be, "For the Respondent;" in any event, Colonel Walter Church, successor to the Van Rensselaer interests, won out. It seems ironic to note that this most

successful litigant died practically bankrupt, in December, 1890, withal the wealth that had passed through his hands.

In conclusion, it may not be amiss to quote the exhortation of Mr. Arthur Gregg ("Old Hellebergh" 1936):

"Every court has supported the legality of the rents, and if you would buy property or accept a mortgage in the territory of Old Rensselaerwyck, it is well to have a complete and thorough search.

"Rude awakenings have come to some when they try to sell or mortgage, only to find through carelessness at time of purchase, they are liable for years of accumulated rent."



THE VAN RENSSELAER MANOR HOUSE
at Watervliet.

From an old print. (Note: This was evidently made after the remodelling by the architect, Upjohn, about 1845.)

CHAPTER VI.

THE DECLINE OF THE TOWN

THE founders of Rensselaerville sought and found a widened opportunity; but the succeeding generations were less willing to stay put, and with reason. The ruthless destruction of the hemlock forests had killed the tanning industry; and young men who had started out in that line, turned to something else as a livelihood. (Such as young John Niles; who became a lawyer; and ultimately, County Judge.)

The leasehold situation all over Rensselaerwyck had driven away new settlers; as well as many of the old ones, who had discovered better and cheaper lands along lines of improved transportation. Likewise, as Dr. Flick points out: "The period when property measured a man's capacity and influence seems to have passed away with the Adoption of the Constitution in 1846."

O. W. Holmes describes the first decade of the nineteenth century as "The Turnpike era;" succeeding decades were marked by the advent of The Steamboat; the Canal; the Railroad. But none of these last ever made any effect upon the little village of Rensselaerville, except to lure away its more ambitious young men. There were other contributing factors, of course; the Gold Rush in 1849, which lured a number of Rensselaerville youths; such as Hagaman (who died shortly after reaching California); Mulford, who went as a cook with a party of prospectors, starting in March 1849, and arriving in Sacramento the following October; and one Searles, who had started off as a clerk in the office of Judge Niles; married Polly Niles; and in years to come, became an honored judge, in turn, out in California. (In 1853, we read that Mrs. Mary

Niles Searles wrote back east for 'letters of dismissal' to the Presbyterian Church in Carson City.)

The storekeepers of Rensselaerville went to town every spring and fall to buy goods; many of them liked the big cities so well that they moved away and became New York or Boston merchants, themselves. The invention of the sewing machine in the thirties caused factories to spring up, and the women operatives who had been used to working on handloom and spinning wheel followed their employment into the distant factories.

In October 1849 the Albany, Rensselaerville & Schoharie Plank Road was organized; this "plank" reinforcement being only eight feet wide, on one side of the road. In the year 1851, a lady from Easthampton writes to her niece in Rensselaerville, asking to hear about Charles—how he gets along in the gold region. And then: "I should be very glad to see you all this spring; but the plank road is not done, and I cannot think of the hills with any comfort; you don't mind them as much as I do, you are so used to them."

By 1857, New York had chartered 352 plank roads, but they were not satisfactory, and deteriorated quickly.

At a time when all the trend was away from Rensselaerville, it is pleasant to hear of something going the other way. To wit, in 1851 to Rensselaerville travelling all the way from Massachusetts came a young daguerreotypist, with his horse and covered wagon in which he carried his camera and developing outfit, taking pictures in each town on the way. It was John L. Rice; who roamed no more, for in 1852 having married Miss Sarah Young, he settled down in business with his brother-in-law, William Magivny in the former Mulford Store (In 1939, the Lewis Becker house). Later on, Mr. Rice started his own business in the brick building, since torn down, then standing at the corner of the state road. He moved to the present Rice home and store about 1864; where his grandson, William Rice, still carries on.

Speaking of store keepers, many of the present generation can remember when the firm of "Cross & Golden" represented to Rensselaerville what Marshall Field did to Chicago; R. H. Macy to New York—a gay, glittering, glamorous emporium.

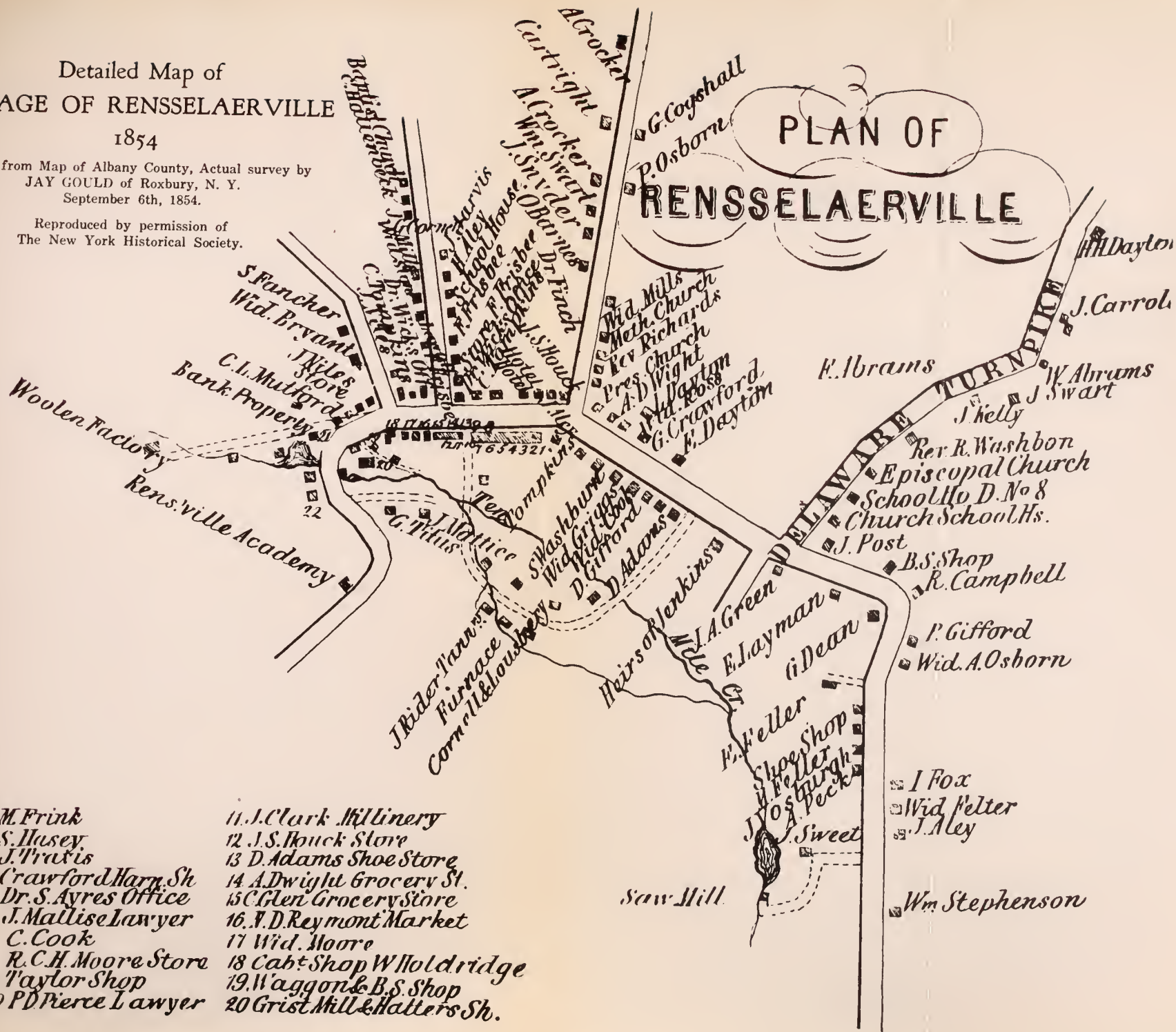
Detailed Map of VILLAGE OF RENSSELAERVILLE

1854

Taken from Map of Albany County, Actual survey by
JAY GOULD of Roxbury, N. Y.
September 6th, 1854.

Reproduced by permission of
The New York Historical Society.

PLAN OF RENSSELAERVILLE



- 1 M. Frink
- 2 S. Hasey
- 3 J. Prax's
- 4 Crawford Harn. Sh
- 5 Dr. S. Ayres Office
- 6 J. Mallise Lawyer
- 7 C. Cook
- 8 R. C. H. Moore Store
- 9 Taylor Shop
- 10 P. D. Pierce Lawyer
- 11 J. Clark Millinery
- 12 J. S. Houck Store
- 13 D. Adams Shoe Store
- 14 A. Dwight Grocery St.
- 15 C. Glen Grocery Store
- 16 N. D. Reymont Market
- 17 Wid. Moore
- 18 Cabt Shop W. Holdridge
- 19 Waggon & B. S. Shop
- 20 Grist Mill & Hatters Sh.

In addition, the store was the centre of political discussion and enlightenment for the town's electorate. (This before the days of woman suffrage.)

In 1870, F. C. Huyck who had been a storekeeper on Main Street, as his father before him, entered into a partnership with one Henry Waterbury for manufacture of felts for paper mills. The felts were taken to the farmers' wives for 'joining.' In 1879, the partnership was dissolved, and Mr. Huyck moved his business to Albany. This move marked the end of active manufacturing carried on in Rensselaerville, and the little town settled back into a condition of general inertia, upset only by the impetus furnished by a few old families who loved the place, and came back every summer, bringing friends who came to love it, too. Even though there was still no way to come save by the Rensselaerville stage, then starting from the Globe Hotel in Albany, corner State and Pearl Streets.

But the world do move . . . and did. For in 1905, the state Road over the Helderberg was completed from Albany; and 1907 saw the inauguration of a motor bus service by Henry Wins of East Berne. Mrs. James Rider recalls taking her daughter, Molly, from Rensselaerville to Albany on the very first trip—to attend the circus—and back, that same July day.

Thus ended the stage coach era; that marked the passing of Old Rensselaerville.

CHAPTER VII.

The Early Settlement.

MRS. WASHBON'S MEMOIRS

Foreword by M. F. T.

In the year 1873, in the columns of the Rensselaerville Press, a weekly publication at that time under the editorship of Mr. P. Winne, appeared a series of "Reminiscences" signed "Citizen," being the non de plume of Mrs. Harriet Jenkins Washbon. Many years after the death of Mrs. Washbon, in the year 1890, her brother, Mr. Charles M. Jenkins had these articles reprinted and privately distributed among his friends, being, as he expressed it: "Nearly if not all the printed historical papers pertaining to the early settlement of the village."

Inasmuch as this invaluable work is out of print, and the few copies yet extant unavailable to the general public, being jealously guarded by their proud possessors under lock, key, and cellophane, we have obtained permission from the Jenkins family to reprint freely such passages as seem to us most essential to the story of Rensselaerville. Our deep regret is that for reasons of space limitations we are not able to present Mrs. Washbon's "Reminiscences" in whole, but only in part.

It is suggested that for a clearer understanding of Mrs. Washbon's text, of the year 1873, our map of the year 1866 be kept at hand for reference.

EXCERPTS FROM "RENSSELAERVILLE"

Reminiscences and Rhymes

BY A CITIZEN

(Mrs. Harriet Jenkins Washbon)

1873

From Chapter III.

With the exception of a few German and Scotch families, the settlers in this part of the town were from New England—men in pursuit of labor. Nowhere could they have hit upon a spot where so much labor was needed, with so little prospect

of reward. Stony, mountainous and heavily timbered, the only way of disposing of the forest was to cut pile and burn the trees upon the land. The timber went to market in the form of potash, which at once became an important, as it was the first, article of export. The current price of ashes was 12½ cents per bushel, and an ashery was an indispensable institution to the merchant. There had been an attempt at milling, previous to 1788, on a small stream at the outlet of a swamp on the Cross farm, by a Mr. Murdock. The millstones were brought on horseback, but for some reason, now unknown, failed to be of any use. Some of the settlers provided themselves with mortars for crushing corn and wheat. They were made of large logs, cut or sawed at a proper height, with a cavity burned out in the upper end to hold grain.

The stream called the "Ten Mile Creek," rises in the south part of Berne, runs through the town of Rensselaerville in a southerly direction, and empties into the Catskill Creek, below the village of Oak Hill. This stream was, at the time of the settlement, constant, and supposed to be sufficient for milling purposes at all seasons of the year; but as the forests were cut down, the streams dwindled, and it was soon found necessary to build a dam. The first was built of logs, four or five feet high. It was soon destroyed by a freshet. A much larger and heavier one was then built, mostly by the voluntary labor of the inhabitants. This formed a reservoir or lake, always dignified by the name of "The Pond" covering nearly one hundred acres, in a natural basin, from five to fifteen feet deep.

On the 22nd of February, 1788, Samuel Jenkins came, with his family, from the vicinity of West Stockbridge, Mass., to the village site, the roughest and rockiest portion of the town. This was, then, a deep ravine, the rocky channel of the Ten Mile Creek, blocked up by fallen trees, darkened by the thick shade of the hemlock, shut in by the high and steep surrounding hills, and covered with a deep snow. A more cheerless and forbidding place could not be imagined. Mr. Jenkins had spent a part of the previous year here, making his home with the Culvers, on the Hagaman farm, and had put up a log house on the ground now occupied by Mrs. Charles

L. Mulford. He came to put up a flouring mill, and in the following spring, by the timely arrival of a party of men looking for farms, the mill was raised very nearly on the spot where the present mill stands. The united ox-power of the neighborhood was scarce sufficient to bring the mill-stones from Hudson, where they were purchased. They were soon put in the mill and in motion, and we may call the village, known for a long time thereafter as "Jenkins Mills," fairly started.

In 1788, Hans Winegar came from Old Stockbridge, and took a lease of the village lot, No. 249, and built a log house near where the present hotel stands.

(Mrs. Washbon portrays the difficulties of early bread-making.)

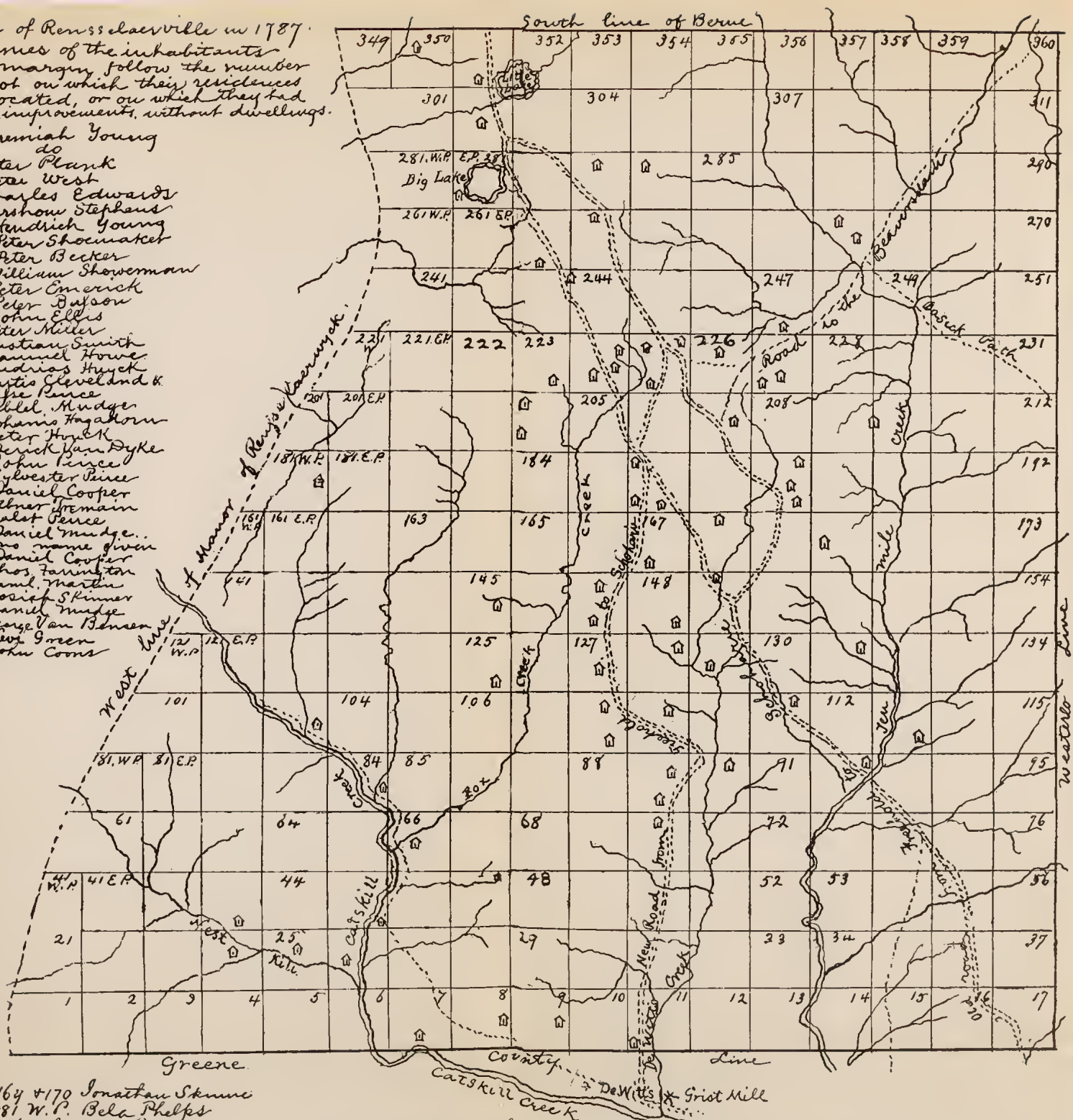
. Each family took a bag of flour, their leaven, and the children too young to be left at the mill, and proceeded to the nearest oven (on the Hagaman farm) remaining until it was baked into bread. The settlers found themselves at one time without flour or grain, the mill unfinished, and the wheat not ready to be cut. Going from one neighbor to another, they learned that each had depended upon borrowing, and that famine was actually upon them. In this emergency, they had nowhere to look but to the Patroon of the Manor, to whom, it seems, they did not look in vain. Mr. Van Rensselaer immediately shipped fifty bushels of wheat to Catskill to be floured for their use.

From Chapter VI.

. Samuel Jenkins built the first framed house in the village on the same lot with the first log house, which he had built, as before mentioned, on the C. L. Mulford lot. He afterwards built the Foster House, now owned by Mr. Becker. (Note: In 1939, Lewis Becker.) The first framed house was then sold to Mr. Lewis, and subsequently burned down. Mr. Jenkins occupied the Foster House, until his son, Jonathan Jenkins, bought and built upon the Hans Winegar farm, in the lower part of the village. (Note: This was in year 1812.) Mr. (Samuel) Jenkins died 1837. His son, Samuel Jenkins, Jr., who was the first native of the village, removed, with many other

Map of Rensselaerville in 1787.
The names of the inhabitants
on the margin follow the number
of the lot on which their residences
were located, or on which they had
made improvements, without dwellings.

- Lot 5 Jeremiah Young
6 do
7 Peter Plank
8 Peter West
9 Charles Edwards
11 Gershow Stephens
24 Hendrick Young
25 Peter Shoemaker
26 Peter Becker
37 William Shoemaker
43 Peter Emerick
45 Peter Dufson
47 John Ellis
56 Peter Miller
66 Gustav Smith
70 Samuel Howe
84 Andries Huyck
88 Curtis Cleveland &
89 Jesse Purce
90 Abiel Mudge
92 Johannis Hagahorn
103 Peter Huyck
104 Gerrit Van Dyke
108 John Purce
109 Sylvester Purce
111 Daniel Cooper
125 Abner Freeman
127 Calst Purce
128 Daniel Mudge
129 no name given
131 Daniel Cooper
145 Thos. Farrington
147 Saml. Martin
148 Josiah Skinner
149 Daniel Mudge
169 George Van Buren
167 Jeff. Green
168 John Coors



- 164 + 170 Jonathan Skinner
181 W.P. Bela Phelps
186 Thomas Brown
• Adam Coors
• Niel Mc Falls
188 Reuben Bumpis
• Philemon Lee
• Hezekiah Dibble
204 Hendrick Rhoda
Samuel Nichols
206 Gamabiel Palmer
207 John Nichols
209 Reuben Bumpis
210 Bela Cook
223 Jonathan Edmonds
224 Alanson Sexton
• Andries Asher

- 225 Andries Asher
• Michael Grant
Ashbel Culver
226 John Ramsay
227 Nathan Hata
Jonathan Crocker
243 Widow Becks
247 Daniel Coops
262 Bate
Bate
263 James Burthial
267 Joseph Lincoln
John Ransier
281 E.P. James Bryce
282 John Heron
283 John Hunter

- 284 no name given
302 Samuel Ramsey
303 John Hunter
350 George Ramsey
351 John Cornell

(Cockburn Survey — 1787)

EARLIEST MAP OF TERRITORY
AFTERWARDS RENSSELAERVILLE.

Reproduced from Mrs. Washbon's book.



emigrants from our town, to a new settlement near Tioga, N. Y.

According to the most reliable authorities, the next building erected was the one fronting the bridge . . then a store of Frisbee & Rhodes. John Howard Frisbee of this firm, was supplied with a small stock of goods by Mr. Rhodes of Long Island but did not continue long in merchandising. A blacksmith shop and a small log house were next built, by Mr. Northway, on the southwest corner of the village lot on the gore of land between the subsequent turnpike and the road (since closed) leading from the south to the upper mill near the falls. From 1789 to 1790, there was a rapid increase of immigrants. Farms were taken and clearings commenced in all parts of the town. Enoch, Ephraim and Amos Crocker, with duplicates of David and Jonathan Crocker, were here early. . . One of the Crockers, with Howard, John and Reuben Frisbee, built the first saw-mill on the Ten Mile Creek, directly below the flouring mill, using the same falls. The upper and higher falls remained unused for milling purposes until a much later period. Our village at this time commenced to assume an importance quite uncomfortable to the Messrs. Camp, Nichols, Chappel, Murdock, Callender, Saxton, Borthwick, Crockers and other dwellers upon the "West Street;" but this settlement still so outnumbered the village that for a time it continued to lead in religion, literature and fashion. Here, as we shall see, the first religious society was formed in 1793, the first school was taught, and Dillworth administered to the youth from far and near by Nathan Hawley in a log school house. Here the belles and the beaux of the time repaired on foot, on horseback, on pillions, to join the dance in the Frisbee House. The Frisbee family were originally from Branford, Conn. Benjamin, Jr., removed to Roxbury, Delaware County; Rufus went to Oneida County, and Peter and Thomas were farmers in this county until their death. John and Reuben practiced medicine, but not exclusive of other pursuits. They were merchants, and with their father carried on a large ashery, and were actively engaged in all matters pertaining to the interests of the town. Benjamin Frisbee was the first justice of the peace in 1788.

(Note by M. F. T.: Mrs. Washbon here inserts copy of letter by permission of Mrs. James Jarvis, daughter of Benjamin Frisbee, written

by Dr. Renben Frisbee in 1788 to his fiancée, Lucinda Murray, afterwards hostess of first public house, keeper of Federal Library, etc., relative to the naming of the village "Rensselaer"—later, 'ville' was affixed, nobody knows how or why. The people of the town, it seemed, had appealed to Mr. Van Rensselaer on the occasion of his visit in their midst together with some other gentlemen from Albany, who had come out to talk about Highways, asking him to fix the name to distinguish it from "Rensselaerwyck." . . . The name "Rensselaer" resulted.) Mrs. Washbon continues:

We find our name described in a public document as late as 1806 as "the village called the city, near Jenkins' Mills." It is quite likely that the establishment of the post office put an end to this bewilderment about names. Albany was our post office for several years. An old man named Brown made occasional journeys on foot, and brought letters. After him Marcellus Weston brought weekly private mail. Dillus Backus was the first mail carrier under the government. The date of his appointment is not remembered, but as Eli Hutchinson, who came from East Hampton, Long Island, in 1801, was our first postmaster, it could not have been before that date.

From Chapter VII.

In the portion of the town lying east of the Ten Mile Creek, we find the farm now owned by Mr. Hoag (lot 113) and the farm then occupied by Mr. Lincoln (lot 267, now the "Pond lot") to be the nearest lots to our village, and the only ones on which improvements had been made before the date of the Cockburn survey. Apollos Moore is said to have been in the town as early as 1785. He subsequently settled two miles east of the village, on Lot 212, and built a substantial house which became his home for life. Mr. Moore was a prominent man in the town, holding successively most of the town offices, and was appointed judge of the county, which office he held for many years. He died in 1840, aged 76 years. He was a soldier in the revolutionary war, enlisting at the age of sixteen.

Silas Sweet came from West Stockbridge, Mass., in 1791, and settled one mile east of the village. Eben and Elijah Sweet came in soon after. John Sweet, who was eleven months old

when he came here, is probably the oldest inhabitant now living in the village. (1873.)

In 1797, Fitch Lamphear selected lot No. 53 on the Ten Mile Creek as the site of a grist and saw-mill. He sold in the following year to Uriah Hall, the founder of the name "Hall's Mills," now "Medusa." The mills and paper manufactory at that place are dependent upon the reservoir above our village for water. Mr. Tanner,—who came to our aid when our foundations were swept away by the freshet, bought the property and built the dam under circumstances which would have discouraged almost every other man,—resides at Medusa. It contains about 120 inhabitants.

A settlement on Willow Brook, a tributary on the east of the Ten Mile Creek, threatened at one time the annihilation of our village as well as the prospective city on the hill. Lot 52 and one-half of 53 were divided into village plots, and sold respectively to the following persons. Ezra Lester from Connecticut, Peleg Peckham from Rhode Island, Hezekiah Holdridge, John Van Deusen, Henry Powers, Charles Griggs, John McCrary and James Bill. Colonel Electus Backus kept a store here. Powers and Griggs were merchants, and Mr. Lester and Mr. Peckham carried on tanning and shoe and leather business generally. "Peckham Hollow" as it was called, has the honor of sending the first representative from our town to the State Legislature, in the person of James Bill, 1796, and seems to have been the seat of government for a time, as the town-meetings were held at the house of Peleg Peckham from 1804-1808. With the failure of bark for tanning, Peckham Hollow subsided, and the village lots were absorbed in the farm of Mr. Lester.

The first town meeting of which we have record left, was held at the house of David Crocker, Esq., on or near the West Street, in 1795. Peter West was chosen supervisor; David Crocker, town clerk; Benjamin Frisbee and Peter West, oversees of the poor; Ariel Murdock, Melatiah Hatch and Ansel Ford, commissioners of highways, Elnathan Spalding, Elijah Murdock, Josiah Skinner and Apollos Moore, assessors; David Brown, Alexander Mackey, Noah Ellis, Joshua Doane, constables; Alexander Mackey, David Brown, Noel Ellis and

Joshua Doane, collectors; Asa Hudson and Melatiah Hatch, fence viewers; David Crocker, pound master. The chief business of the town officers in the early times was the laying out of roads, which, as they are described mostly by marked trees, required some study to make them out intelligibly; and the recording of marks for shepherds to distinguish their respective flocks, which, for lack of fences, must have made common pasturage of the town.

It is surprising how many taverns and places to entertain travelers were necessary, and how large a proportion of our townsmen were indorsed by the Board of Excise as "of good moral character and sufficient intelligence to keep a public inn or tavern." In 1796, there were nineteen licenses recognized, or about one to every three square miles. The roads were undoubtedly "hard to travel" and the people very thirsty.

We must now look in upon our village, which progresses slowly. Next after the building of the store. (Note: house opposite bridge) the Frisbee House was erected in 1790-1. Dr. Reuben Frisbee built, upon the ground now occupied by his son, Franklin Frisbee (Note: in 1939, known as "Catalpa House") the house which has since been moved across the plank road. This house was the first which had the distinction of a coat of paint. A store and tavern, a doctor's and justice's office, the Federal Library, a ball room, Free Masons' lodge, and the family were all, at one time, accommodated in this house. Dr. Frisbee did not live long to enjoy it. He died in 1801, and was the first person buried in the village cemetery.

Soon after, the Frisbee house, a tavern, was built by Reuben Hatch nearly on the site of the present hotel. This house stood for many years, occupied by Mr. Hatch, and after him, by Thomas Curren, as a public house. The "upper mill," as it was called, on what it now (1873) the site of Waterbury & Huyck's Felting Mills, was built in 1794-5, by Reuben and John Frisbee, Samuel Hatch and Hans Winegar.

Long Island contributed largely to the settlement of our village and town. Daniel Conkling, Jr., came from East Hampton in 1792 and his brother, Josiah, about the same year. They tarried for a while with Mr. King, near the "West Street,"

but finally settled upon lots 250 and 269, about a mile east of the village. The abundance of hemlock furnished great facilities for leather making, which was a much longer process then than now. After the roads were in condition for bringing in foreign hides, there were tanneries in every quarter of the town. The business was carried on for many years after Mr. Conkling's death by his sons, Daniel, Jr, Gurdon and David, giving employment to many men, until their large tannery on the Ten Mile Creek, just below the village, was burned down, and the supply of bark too nearly exhausted to justify rebuilding.

Daniel Conkling, Sr., came in 1798. Henry Conkling, Matthew Mulford, Charles L. Mulford, his son: Nathan Dayton, John, Samuel and Edward Hand, Eli Hutchinson and his sister, Mrs. Asa Colvard, were all from East Hampton, and all here as early as 1801. Samuel and Edward Jones, with their sister, Mrs. Foster, Charles Pierson and Job Post, were from South Hampton. Samuel Jones built what is now Mr. Hallenbeck's blacksmith's shop, then the most stylish house in town. . . . the house built by Mr. Jones, with the tannery, became the property of Wheeler Watson from Rhode Island. How tempting and luscious were the apples and pears which loaded the orchard of Mr. Watson, which extended from his house down to Mrs. Adams' corner.

Mr. Watson retained this property till the demand for building lots, and a disposition to retire from active business, induced him to part with it.

Rufus and Thomas Watson (brothers of Wheeler, above mentioned) with three sisters, Mrs. Lester, Mrs. Peckham and Mrs. Josiah Watson, were here at an early date. Rufus Watson located first, east of the village, but soon removed, and building first a small house and shop, finally built the large house, now occupied by Mr. Magivny, which was for many years one of our village hotels.

Rufus Watson represented our town in the Assembly of 1816. To his son, S. V. R. Watson of Buffalo, we are indebted for the enlargement of our cemetery by the purchase and gift of three or four adjoining acres, on the occasion of the burial of his sister, Mrs. David Conklin. This cemetery is beauti-

fully situated on high ground, looking down the valley to the Catskill Mountains.

From Chapter IX.

The log school house on the "West Street" gave place to a new one in the Woodford district, a step toward the village, suggestive of the future fate of the city on the hill. Patty Pond (Note: "Martha"—later, Mrs. Josiah Conklin) taught here, her "three hours by the hour glass" before the floor was put in.

The house now standing and occupied by Mr. William Aley (1873) was built by Father Fuller, in 1801, and was his residence at the time of his death. About the time of the death of his brother Reuben, in 1801, Dr. John Frisbee and his brother Peter removed from "Pisgah" to the village, and built their store and ashery on the south side of the street, below the crossing of the small stream, and their dwelling house, opposite, or on the north side of the street, which a few years since, was moved back and built into the house now owned by Mr. J. L. Rice. William and Urial King put up a mill for fulling, dressing and dyeing cloths, a little below the grist mill, and soon after Hollister and Miner added carding machinery. Mr. Hollister built the house now called the Parsonage, which stood on the site of the present Presbyterian Church.

Capt. Asa Colvard, from Columbia County, built the house now owned by Mrs. Hagaman, but carried on a distillery on his farm just over our town line, in Westerlo, which gave name to what is known as the "Still Hill." He was also engaged in merchandise and milling, and at the time of his death was sheriff of Albany County. Mr. Colvard, in company with Jonathan Jenkins, in 1803, built what was called the lower grist mill. Thus early we find three flouring mills in operation, which leads to the conclusion that wheat and grains of all kinds were grown abundantly upon the new soil.

RENSSELAERVILLE

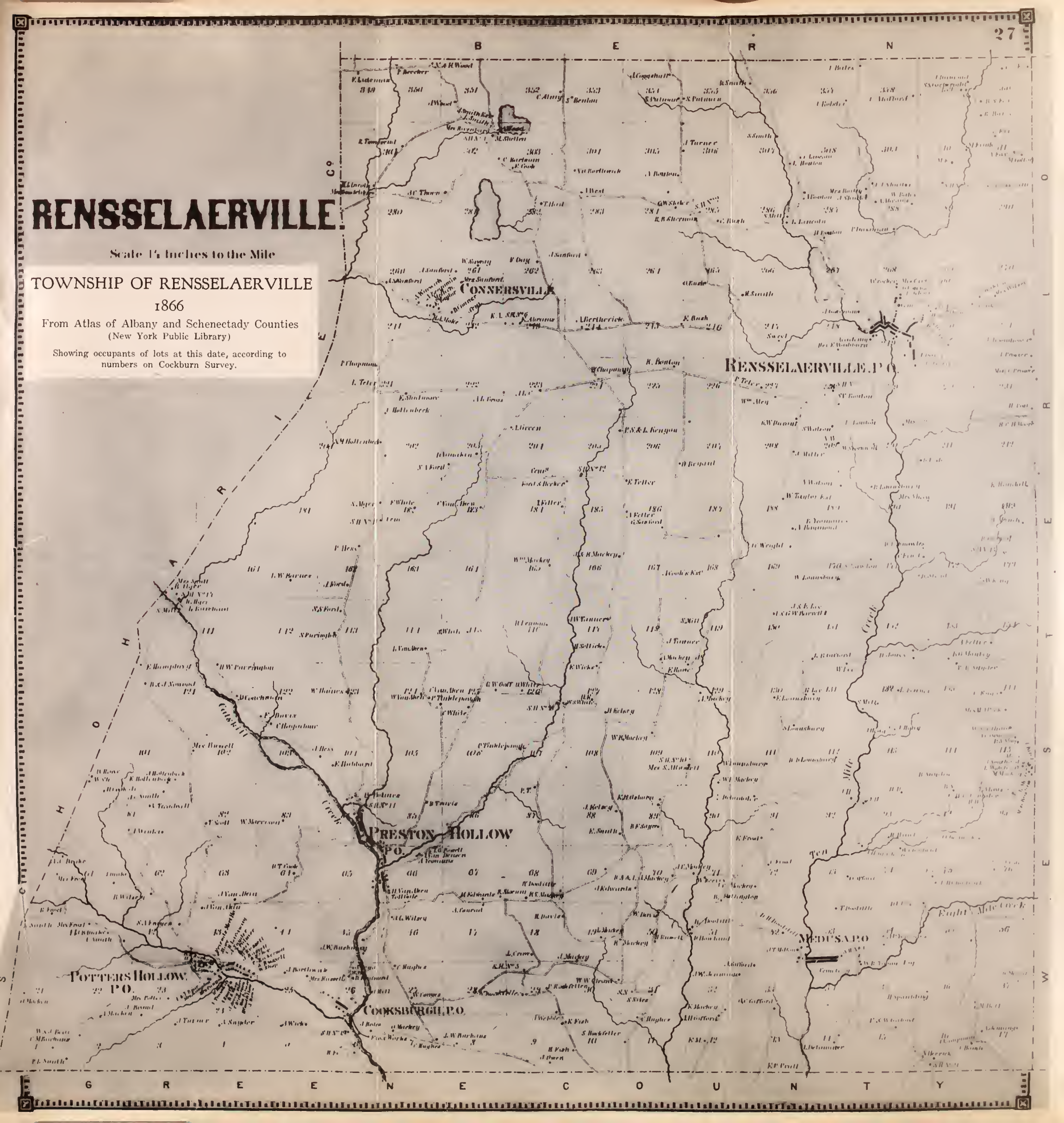
Scale 1 1/4 inches to the Mile

TOWNSHIP OF RENSSELAERVILLE

1866

From Atlas of Albany and Schenectady Counties
(New York Public Library)

Showing occupants of lots at this date, according to
numbers on Cockburn Survey.





CHAPTER VIII.

RENSSELAERVILLE

Extracts from the Reminiscences of an Octogenarian

MARY BREWERTON HEDGES

1832 - 1920

Contributed by her Granddaughter

ETHEL GREENE GILBERT

BORN in Elizabeth, then Elizabethtown, New Jersey, on October 4th, 1832. She never knew her own parents, her mother having died when she was an infant, and some question having arisen as to who should possess her. She was cared for by relatives. Her first recollection was of a kindly woman by the name of Mehitable Brandt, at whose home, in Chatham, N. J., she lived for a short time—though she had vivid memories of some of the things that occurred in that home. From there, she was taken to the home of the Lawrences in New York.

“I have hazy recollections of a fine house in New York, of caresses and kindnesses there, of Aunt Lawrence and cousins Hudson, Fanny, and Julia, and of an old family servant, “Mammy Ann,” nurse to the Lawrence children.”

“My next home was to be the controlling influence of my whole life.”

This, the home of the Reverend Samuel Fuller in Rensselaerville; her friends placed her there on the advice of the Rev. Dr. Berrien, then the celebrated Rector of Trinity Church, New York, and a friend of her relatives there.

“He must have been impressed by the great respectability of Grandpa Fuller, as I afterward called him and by his knowledge of Mr. Fuller’s distinguished New England parentage, traceable to the combined Fuller and Greenleaf families.”

She was six years of age when she became the ward of her beloved Grandma and Grandpa Fuller. The Fullers then lived on the glebe farm about two miles from Rensselaerville, and while Mr. Fuller was retired at the time Mary Brewerton came to him, he still conducted services at the village church. The household consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Fuller, Ollie, a family servant devoted to little Mary, and who was with her a great deal throughout her life — a hired man; and the tenant farmer and his wife. It must have been a most fascinating home, for here she was beloved and tenderly cared for by the dear old clergyman and his lovely and thrifty wife; the second Mrs. Fuller—she who had been born Flora Backus; daughter of Col. Electus Backus, a soldier in the Revolution.

One break came in little Mary's life with the Fullers, a year after she came to Rensselaerville, when Aunt Lawrence and her husband decided to go west to Rock River, Ill., and take Mary with them. They travelled by rail (1839) on "the first railroad in New York State, being a short stretch from Albany to Schenectady" then "by packet" on the Erie Canal to Buffalo, and then by boat to Cleveland. The next westward move by prairie schooner.

"I remember, at the tail of the wagon, looking back over the road darkening in the twilight, and seeing a prairie wolf cross the track. This in Illinois."

The family were nearly wiped out by malaria, and Mary was brought back to her much loved home in Rensselaerville with the Fullers, a very sick child, tenderly nursed by the devoted household. Dr. Wicks cared for her, and she lay for many days.

"...in the alcove bed with its curtains hung from the high tester. These curtains were printed with black peacocks on a mustard ground, the general effect a dingy orange."

Her guardian on his return from a cruise—he was an Admiral in the United States Navy—was much displeased at the "Lawrences' stealing her without his consent."

Mary learned to spell and read at Grandpa Fuller's knee, and tells of his "kindliness, slowness, and deliberation of manner," and on Sunday went to church in the village.

"Seated on a little chair between Grandpa and Grandma as they jogged to and from church behind the white mare."

It was thus that Grandfather Hedges first saw her; he a young man of twenty, and she a child . . . and from that very moment, he loved her.

In 1841-2, she attended a district school "at the cross-roads" going to and from school with the little Barkmans, building playhouses on the slate ledges along the way.

"A thought that seems to have been born with me—that I must teach and uplift whomever I came in contact with—held me as regard to the Barkmans."

She taught them parts of the Church Catechism, herself having "by heart" portions "especially language to my taste." She was proud of her white ruffled pantalettes, and much humiliated when, having torn them in her play, she had to wear some dark plaid ones as punishment.

Another memory she had was of a pasture lot near the school house where general training took place.

"From the road before the school house, one could see the red and blue plumed heads marching, and hear the beat of drums and call of fifes; and there were reports of gingerbread, early apples, and root beer"

but the children were not allowed to attend, for school kept just the same.

Later, a governess, Miss Durant, was obtained for Mary, and it was then she began to learn Botany and Painting. She loved the garden, and knew every favorite tree in the place. At an early age, she began to notice flowers, and Miss Durant promoted her to the study of Botany. When eleven years old, she had prepared long lists of plants, analyzed after Mrs. Lindsey's artificial method . . . Physiological Botany was unknown; laboratory work in Botany far in the future. Also color was always a great joy to her, and very early in life, she used colored stones to draw pictures, rocks, and

"sometimes when I was lucky enough to have paper, the pictures were colored by means of beet juice and other vegetable dyes. No one ever laughed at these, and I was very happy in them."

The family always admired all she did, and encouraged her to go on. The house was always amply supplied with delicious food, and at this time, she must also have learned to love to cook; an art in which she always excelled, much to the pleasure of her family and friends.

There were farm neighbors whom she visited often. These were Aunt Spencer Palmer, Aunt Bridget Watson, who belonged to the rather distinguished family of Peckhams; and the Lesters, related to the Fullers. (Note: Mr. Ezra Lester's first wife was Mercy Peckham; his second, Harriet Fuller—daughter of "Grandpa Fuller.") They attended church, driving to town behind the white mare; taking lunches which they ate during the noon hour, sometimes going to the house of Mr. Hull, afterwards "the Rectory," but "most often we partook of our lunch in our pews, passing around the ample baskets."

When Mary was eleven, the Rensselaerville Academy opened its doors, and she entered as a pupil.

"The old Presbyterian Church had been moved down from the hill a mile beyond where it had stood vacant for a long time, and remodelled into a building having a Grecian front. Mr. Henry Gallup was principal, and Miss Betsey King preceptress... Here began my acquaintance with the young people of the village." Helen, Dr. Wicks' youngest daughter, was her most intimate friend.

Grandpa Fuller had died when Mary was ten years old; two years later, Grandma Fuller married Dr. Zina W. Lay; and when Mary was 14, the Lays sold the farm, and bought a house in the village; "the largest house in the village, which stood just below the Academy Hill."

Here Dr. Lay had his office.

Among the young people of Mary's acquaintance were numbered Eliza Hewson, Rose King (niece of Mrs. King—principal of the Academy) Helen Lawton; Julia Rider, Sarah Hinman, Henry Spawn, Harriet Mulford. There were delightful afternoons spent with Mrs. Jonathan Jenkins and Miss Pierson, at Locust Place.

"To go there, enjoy the pretty drawing room, the portfolio of pictures, the dainty supper, the sweet attentions of these two ladies was a little taste of Paradise."

There were also Delight and Deborah Wicks—older than Mary was—and the Wicks boys. Mary graduated from the Academy at 17 years, and taught school for a while in the upper part of a house owned by Mr. Tompkins “holding a little flaxen-haired child of my adoration, Nannie Converse, in my arms as I taught.” This was a summer school, and brought her \$16.00. She also taught a while in Chesterville.

“From 1846 to about 1850, Rensselaerville had its great boom . . . A German named Dietz came with his wife, his secretary, Ernest Pheiffer, and a number of countrymen as workmen, and set up a factory for the manufacture of fine broadcloths. They planted the hillside opposite the Falls with teasels for raising the nap on their cloth.”

Mrs. Dietz, it appears, was a well educated woman, and much superior intellectually to her manufacturing husband. She had a little library. The Dietzes gave dances for their employees which the young people attended, and Mr. and Mrs. Dietz “in all their plentitude of proportions, led the revels.”

Shortly after this time, the Lays moved to Albany, taking Ollie with them, and, of course, Mary. Her life in Albany was most interesting, for there she met many brilliant and famous people, once listening to a speech delivered from the steps of the Capitol by Daniel Webster. She studied painting under the Hart brothers, James and William, both artists. Also she continued her general studies while in Albany; taught in a country school; and although an excellent position was offered her at Pelham Priory, a school not far from New York, which still exists,—she refused, preferring to go back to Rensselaerville and live with the Washbons; Dr. Washbon having succeeded “Grandpa Fuller” as rector of the Church.

She had many friends in Rensselaerville; the Jarvises; Lesters, Shaws, Nileses; Libby Conkling, wife of Clifford Jarvis, the dentist. Related to the Josiah Conklings by marriage was Mary Hedges, half-sister of Rev. Josiah Mulford Hedges, whom Mary Brewerton was later to marry. Mary tells us of Joshua Bogue who was drowned in “The Big Pond”—afterwards named “Lake Myosotis” by Mrs. Charles Mulford (Deborah Wicks). Of “the Falls” she says:

“From this village, I used to go down to the flat rocks

overhanging the Creek, that after leaving the mill dam, flowed far below these rocks, spurling up from depths of shrubbery and young trees. These rocks were carpeted with moss, and fernbordered; and I spent many happy hours upon them, reading or sewing with my best-beloved friend, Helen Wicks." . . . "I used to call on the Daytons, and their daughter Rhuanah... The Jenkinses came out from Albany to visit Mrs. 'Judge' Jonathan Jenkins of Locust Place. Mrs. Washbon was their only daughter, so we saw much of them . . . These were my friends among whom I lived and loved the last four years before my marriage. Hattie Mulford was at home, raising roses and pansies, and I visited her often."

"The Little school house stood above Mr. Eli Hutchinson's gift of a tank for the great spring at the foot of the church hill."

Life at the Rectory must have been very pleasant, with many guests, teas, and a Church Sewing Society.

"The holidays, like Easter and Christmas, were charmingly kept; often, owing to Mrs. Washbon's genius and humor, there was a lovely quaintness and originality about them, in which the parish and neighbors shared."

During these years, Mary painted a great deal. "I copied flowers in 'watercolor,' from Mrs. Washbon's rich and choice flowerbeds."

All these years, she had continued her acquaintance with Mr. Hedges; finally, they became engaged, and on the 9th of October, 1856, they were married. The church was crowded. Harriet Mulford was her bridesmaid;

"bringing flowers. I remember the tall foxgloves. She lost one of her gloves, and so wore one of mine during the ceremony."

Mr. and Mrs. Washbon drove with them to Albany, the first stage of the honeymoon, where the bride and groom stayed at the American Hotel, and were called upon by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Jenkins.

Grandfather Hedges' first parish was at Honeyoye Falls. Mother (Harriet Washbon Hedges) was born in Rensselaerville on the 13th of September, 1857, in the 'little yellow

house" behind the Church, which Mrs. Washbon had made ready for Grandma, who was so homesick and yearned so for Rensselaerville that it was though best to bring her there. Later, they went to Middleburg; and then to Herkimer.

After the death of her husband and three children, Grandma, with her only remaining child, my mother, went to Fairbault, Minnesota, where Grandma taught in Bishop Whipples School, St. Mary's, which Mother attended, graduating with highest honors. During their sojourn there, Grandma made a botanical discovery which was brought to the notice of Asa Gray, who sent her charts and descriptions and water drawings on to Harvard. She also invented a botanical cabinet.

Following Mother's graduation, they both spent a year in New York together, where Mother studied Kindergartening and Grandma studied watercolor and oil painting in the studio of a French artist, Frederick Rondell.

Then back to Rensselaerville, where they kept house in the Niles house, near the end of the Lane.

"The Frisbee house was opposite; on the same side, the Merrimans and Halls were living in the old Gideon Cornell house; next to that, was the end of the lane, except the Baptist Church. Next below, on the same side, was Dr. Finch's house; next the Press Office, and then, in an ample yard, Franklin Frisbee's house, afterward, the home of the Chadwicks." (And, many years later, Catalpa House.) "At this time—" (about 1875) the Waterburys of Schoharie had taken the factory at the foot of the Falls, and arranged to carry on a fine felt making business there; and young Frank Huyck had gone in with them. He had married the youngest Miss Niles (Emily), and they lived in the old Presbyterian Session House, which he had porched and had fitted with modern doors and windows. They were young and gay, and were fond of youth and gaiety." . . . "I became quite intimate with Mrs. Huyck, though she was my junior by many years, and liked her very much."

Much to the horror of some of the natives, they (the young Frank Huycks) fitted up the Academy, where they had plays and much fun in their preparation.

In order that she might have some occupation, Grandma bought the "Rensselaerville Press;" they used the old hand presses, and the output was not more than 1000 papers weekly. Tramp printers came along and sometimes helped out in emergencies.

In 1879, the Waterbury and Huyck firm was dissolved, and the Huycks moved to Albany. After the Huycks left, Grandma took the Sessions House. My mother had married Monroe Greene; and in 1880, their first child was born in this house.

This marks the end of Grandma's autobiography; started when she was eighty-three years old.

When my brother James was about a year old, they all moved to Utica; then to Herkimer, where they were living, when Grandma died—in Norwich, Conn., January 25th, 1920.

CHAPTER IX.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE RENSSELAERVILLE STAGE

by

BERTHA JENKINS KELLER

MANY A WEARY MILE

THE Concord Coach was a marvel of construction. It was springless, the body being hung on leather straps or thorough braces and when bowling along the highways had a bounding motion forward and back".

Such a coach once covered the miles between our village and the capital city.

That one of these coaches survived (minus the wheels) as a playhouse for a stage proprietor's little daughter, I know to be a fact.

The stages of my day were less romantic and far from being "a coach and four". They were apt to be anything that went on four wheels and the horses any kind that went on four feet. Sometimes they dispensed with the fourth foot and hobbled along on three, until a place was reached where they could be released and some other unfortunate beast put in the shafts.

Ordinarily the stage was a three or four seated wagon, with a top, to which were attached side curtains to be let down in time of storm. At the back of the wagon was a space for luggage. Anything and everything from a watermelon to a coffin was cheerfully taken aboard.

If drifted roads necessitated a light conveyance, sometimes just the foundation on runners was used, the driver seated precariously on the frame. On one such sketchy vehicle one of our village boys (now a prominent attorney) begged to ride, as it was imperative for him to get back to college. He rode off, perched alongside the driver, his feet in a soap box.

The stage left the Rensselaerville postoffice (then housed in some general store) at 5 a. m. in summer, 7 a. m. in winter. This meant getting up before daylight to eat breakfast and have time to "bundle up" in layers of garments, topped by a heavy shawl which, after we had been a few miles on the road, became the sport of every breeze.

Woe to our feet if forgotten were the hot brick or soapstone that had been all night heating.

The stage left by the old Albany road, at the lower end of the village. First stop: The watering-trough that stood for many years in front of the blacksmith shop.

Time and so called progress have removed these old land marks; also the ancient marking stone that stood just below the school house on Academy Hill, and informed the traveller or passer-by that it stood its ground "Twenty-three miles from Albany".

This was a conservative estimate, especially in winter, when detours were frequently made through fields, over stone walls, down wood roads, skirting farm yards, and around houses, to avoid the roads, drifted full.

Six miles out, the first halt was made at Reidsville where the stage proprietor was unusually on hand to greet the travellers.

On one such occasion, after scrutinizing a lady (obscured in a heavy veil) he tactfully remarked, "Well, I ought to know who you am, but I ain't quite sure who you be". Friend or stranger, hospitality was offered and we were all invited in "to warm", and, if we looked breakfastless, to "set by and have a piece". Here among nut shells and empty cider glasses (aftermath of a night before party in the dance hall over the sheds) we waited in the thick of pancake smoke, intrigued by the vanishing mounds of "buckwheats" and the dunking, at arms length, of slices of bread in a general bowl of molasses.

After many bickerings as to ways and means, between the proprietor and the driver, the passengers having settled themselves under the buffalo robes, we finally got under way again, heading for the Helderberg, the most formidable part of the journey (either coming or going) for if the road was icy, the sleighs skidded, and the horses slipped helplessly, perilously near the edge of the mountain road.

At Clarksville, described locally as "down 'n under the hill", a second stop was made, for the purpose of gathering up the mail, resting the horses, attending to any little incidentals, perhaps casually changing the wheels while the passengers sat inside the jacked-up stage, or stood by and gave advice.

Seven hours were consumed covering the miles from Rensselaerville to Albany, and almost any mishap (the loss of a wheel, a snapped pole, broken harness, a slack, lame or balky horse) might add a half hour to the schedule—which was elastic.

The stage often "broke down" after which it "went hay-wire" literally, for there was always a bit of that indispensable material handy and it was used to hold together almost anything in time of stress and strain.

There is always time-consuming "errands" en route. The driver hopping on and off the stage to deliver, or acquire, crates of hens, baskets of washing, fruit, or eggs, or mayhap a cake for the church social was trustingly put into his hands. Added to all this, there were waits innumerable that seemed interminable. Going on the principle that "Time was made for slaves", it was blissfully ignored. We arrived "when we reached there".

A few of the never-to-be forgotten spots were:

"Still Hill" where we met the sunrise, and where, in the early days, Asa Colvard, no doubt, drank the health of his customers, to stimulate trade.

"The Eggtree", a farm house curiosity, a small dead tree entirely covered with empty but perfect eggshells.

"Dunbar Hollow" — gloomy and bodingly silent, where in a dark ravine murder was concealed until the victim was discovered hidden in a hollow log.

"Rock City" where a squatter-like settlement clung to a rocky ledge, and where innumerable children ran out of the picturesque shacks to see the stage go by.

"The Haunted House" — an old stone house, seldom occupied, that stood aloof in the spring sunshine on the edge of a meadow bright with cowslips, or empty and sad in the falling snow of a December day. In passing we sensed the vague loneliness that hung about its deserted walls, which probably gave

rise to the superstition, for I never heard anything definite about the ghost!

"The Clay Hills" where after a spring thaw the adhesive mud "staged a hold-up", but certainly didn't hold up a stage for we sank into the mud up to the hubs, and became prisoners until someone was dispatched for help and a farm team drew us from the "Slough of Despond".

Pleasanter to remember are:

The stretch of dim woods where the notes of the hermit thrush echoed.

The bright summer fields, where the bob-o-links sang. . . .

Reminiscences of the stage ride would not be complete without reference to a feature of the return journey, the walk up the Helderberg. On hot summer days, as a humane gesture, all able-bodied passengers took to the road, soon out-distancing the horses, toiling up the terrific grade. At the crest, there was plenty of time to enjoy the view, an extensive expanse of farms spread out far below us, edged by the Adirondacks, with a far distant view of the Berkshires and Green Mountains. By going into the fields to the right, a view of the Catskills was also obtained.

The view has not changed. It is just as inspiring today, although the State Road ascends at another part of the Helderberg, and the old road is abandoned.

The third and last stop was made at Union Church (Unionville) where at certain seasons a meal was eaten by those who had the hardihood to face the food.

Those not enthusiastic about the dinner, betook themselves to the sitting room where, around a glowing coal stove, they thawed out, or sat in the commodious rocking chairs and fanned the hour away in "the good old summer time".

After leaving Unionville the stage dragged through hot sand stretching interminably through Delmar.

Across the old Normanskill bridge a turn was made to the right, which brought us to Kenwood. The Kenwood Mills (prior to 1894), and the Sacred Heart Convent, were a welcome sight, for soon we were on the outskirts of the city, and presently rattling down the streets of Albany. People stared, and small boys jeered. The humiliation was almost too much after all

we had been through (especially the mud, still generously be-caked on the vehicle). Dusty, dishevelled and weary, or half frozen, so that our feet refused to function, we staggered into the arms of welcoming relatives and at long last the ride from Rensselaerville to Albany was over.

AFTERWORD

On a winter's afternoon the sun would sink away, early, behind the distant hills and "the zero hour" of a long day was the cold twilight before we made the last miles and dropped down into the village cupped in the hills — the village so dear to our hearts, a lovely, lasting heritage from our Pioneer Ancestors.

APPENDIX

(A) RENSSELAERVILLE FEDERAL LIBRARY

The original Federal Library was started on March 13th, 1798, and incorporated under the Act of Legislature of April 5th, 1798. The object of the founders was declared to be: "to facilitate the means of literary information, collect funds, and establish a library to be called The Federal Library."

Original incorporators were Samuel Fuller, 1 share, \$2.00, Samuel Jenkins, 1 share, \$2.00, and Isaac Hyde, 1 share, \$2.00.

Robert P. Lewis engaged as Librarian at \$3.00 per annum.

186 names on the original list of members of the Library which was kept from time to time in different parts of the town.

The Mss. Room of the State Library at Albany holds an old ledger of the Rensselaerville Federal Library, with entries of the years 1830-35 . . . All money transactions are figured in shillings and pence. Under date of April 7th, 1832 is noted: "James G. Jarvis, the Library to keep for 20 shillings per year."

Sample Book Label

Rensselaerville Federal Library
No.....
To be returned every second Tuesday in
March, June, September and December.

Among the books listed at the time were Silliman's Journal: Domestic Encyclopedia: Life of Bonaparte; Sketch-book; Life of Louis XIVth; Charlotte Temple; Children of the Abbey.

An auction was called for on March 24th, 1832; followed by

NOTICE

The stockholders of the Rensselaerville Federal Library are requested to meet at the Public House of the Shepherd on Saturday, the 30th inst. at 1 o'clock P.M., for the purpose of making a division of the proceeds of the sales of the Books of said Library.

By order of the Trustees.

JONATHAN JENKINS
A. B. RAYMOND
DAVID BOUTON

GEORGE COGESHALL
JOHN NILES
ICHABOD PECK

The last entry in this book is of February 20th, 1835.

(B)

THE EPISCOPAL LADIES BENEVOLENT SOCIETY OF RENSSELAERVILLE

(Note: The original Minute Book of this organization was discovered in the Library of the Late Reverend John Prout. We quote a few excerpts, together with names of the founders.)

"At a meeting of the Episcopal Ladies of the Town of Rensselaerville, held at the house of C. Tompkins, on the evening of the third of January, 1831, it was resolved to form a society to dispense necessities to the poor, in the vicinity of the village."

"The title of this association shall be The Episcopal Ladies Benevolent Society of Rensselaerville."

The following officers were then chosen:

PHOEBE MOORE, President	MARIA MOORE
CHARLOTTE COLVARD, Secretary	CLARINE A. COLVARD
POLLY PECK, Treasurer	SARAH ADAMS
MARGARET PECK	Visiting Committee

Proceeds of the following members the sum of 50 cents each:

Lucinda Frisbee, Elizabeth Tompkins, Charlotte Adams, Phebe Moore, Maria Frisbee, Margaret Peck, Tempe Jarvis, Eliza Osborn, Phebe Anne Wood, Polly Peck, Clarine A. Colvard, Sarah D. Adams, Charlotte Colvard, Maria Moore, Harriet Lester, Millie Mulford, Betsey M. Jenkins, Mary H. Mulford, Flora Fuller, Mary Pierson, Caroline Frisbee, Julia Cornell.

Paid the above sums to the Treasurer.

(Signed) C. COLVARD, Secretary.

(Note) Additional members who joined later are listed:

Fanny Wicks, Harriet Jenkins, Palmira Frisbie, Parthenia Durant, Delilah Smith, Lucinda Jarvis, Catherine Jarvis, Cornelia B. Hyde, Isabella Conkling, Lucia M. Bellamy.

* * * *

"Resolved: the society meet once in three months for the purpose of sewing; during which time, three quilts have been made, and other articles of clothing."

"The quarterly meeting on the first Monday in July was so thinly attended that no business was done."

"The Visiting Committee report again as follows: Mrs. P. has been helped to one frock and petticoat and set of baby linen. Mrs. A. one nightgown and dimity petti-

coat; two flannel waistcoats and other things. Mrs. M. . . . two new shirts and one old one; one dimity frock, one silk apron, one pr. trousers, two vests, two pounds of cotton, and sundry other items."

"Items of disbursement:

For cotton Batting	2.37½
For four yards and 1/2 of calico.....	2.56¼
For a piece of factory.....	3.75
For four yards of muslin.....	.50

"This report is made for the satisfaction and encouragement of the Society, and they may be assured that the hearts of these individuals have been made glad, and their distressing situation more comfortable in consequence of their exertions, which have been so light on their part that probably they are hardly aware that they have exerted themselves at all and in the hope that they will become more deeply interested in this labour of love."

(C) ANTI-RENT NOTICES

NOTE: A complete file of "THE ALBANY FREEHOLD-ER," a weekly newspaper, "to be devoted to the Anti-Rent Cause," is on the shelves of the Rensselaerville Library at the present time. (1938.) This publication ran during the years 1845-7, while the battle was on before the legislature.

On the evidence of C. F. Bouton, "the banner town as to number of subscribers" was Rensselaerville.

(Notice.)

ANTI-RENT CELEBRATION

July 4th, 1845

Seger's Hotel-New Salem in New Scotland

Vice President, JOSEPH CONNER

of Rensselaerville.

(News item, under date of July 7th, relative to the above Celebration.)

"The Euterpean Brass Band of Rensselaerville were present, and in addition to their soul stirring, patriotic and martial airs, they sung two uprousing Anti-Rent songs which we publish in another column."

(Notice of Anti-Rent Meeting.)

"At House of Henry Wharton, Rensselaerville."

VALENTINE TREADWELL, President

LAWRENCE FALK, Vice President

STEPHEN M. HOLLENBECK, appointed delegate to attend monthly meeting, etc.

(D)

ADVERTISEMENTS APPEARING IN "The Freeholder."

(Note: Prices are quoted in shillings; pence; and dollars. Also in terms of barter; thus: "Socks and yarn taken in exchange for drygoods at cash prices.")

Under date of April 16th, 1845:

GREAT BARGAINS!

COOK & RIVENBERG

Formerly Tompkins & Cook

"A quick sixpence is better than a slow shilling."

"New Goods:

A Stock of Goods that will do any Lady's eyes good."

BONNETS

The subscriber has a very large assortment,
all NEW and CHEAP.

Will you look at them at the old shop?

MARRIETT E. COOK

(Note: in these days, there was evidently much need for legal counsel.) Among the legal fraternity we find listed:

O. M. CHITTENDEN

Attorney and Counsellor at Law
and Solicitor in Chancery

J. MACKEY

Attorney at Law
Office opposite Hotel.

(Note: Many business men in Albany utilized the newspaper's advertising columns for attracting rural patronage.)

NATHANIEL GALLUP

Farmers and Mechanics Hotel
91 Washington Street Albany

(E)

(Extracts from "Catalogue of the Officers and Students)
of the

RENSSELAERVILLE ACADEMY

for the Academic Year, 1857-8."

Trustees: Rev. L. M. Purrington, Pres't.; William McGivny, Sec't.; John S. Huyck, John Niles Esq., Platt Wickes, M.D., R. C. H. Moore, David Conklin, David Adams, Chester Cook, James Jarvis, Franklin Frisbie, Gideon Cornell, Rufus Woodward, John Fairlee, John L. Rice, Rev. A. W. Garvin.

John S. Huyck, Librarian.

R. C. H. Moore, Treasurer.

Teachers

BETHUEL LOUNSBURY	Principal
MRS. MARY G. LOUNSBURY	Preceptress
MISS HARRIET BURFITT	Assistant
MISS NANCY C. LOUNSBURY	Assistant

PUPILS

Ladies	51
Gentlemen	40

91

"Rensselaerville is accessible from Albany by a line of stages which alternate on successive days between the two places."

(Note: at this time, the Albany Terminal was the Eagle Street Hotel.)

"This institution has been in operation 14 years."

"Three terms of 14 weeks each:

September 20th - December 24th

January 3rd - April 8th

April 25th - July 29th.

(Cost of Tuition)

Primary Department \$2.00 for 11 weeks

Older pupils, 3.00 " " "

up to 5.00 " " "

Music, Drawing, Painting, extra.

"The expenses of warming, cleaning, and keeping in repair the rooms constitute the incidentals, and are divided up equally among and paid by the scholars, in addition to their regular tuition. This charge varies from 12½ to 37½ cents per term."

"Good board in private families from \$1.50 to \$2.50 a week."

(F)

RENSSELAERVILLE PRESS

(In the '70s and '80s, the "Press" was issued as a weekly, with P. Winne the first editor; when he moved to Greenville, Mrs. Mary B. Hedges became the editor; afterwards, her Daughter, Mrs. H. M. Greene. It was in the columns of the "Press" that the "Reminiscences" of Mrs. Harriet Washbon first appeared, in 1873; afterwards -- 1888 -- reprinted in pamphlet form for gift presentation by her brother, Charles M. Jenkins, Esq.)

From a few scattered copies of "the Press" - - it unfortunately appears that no complete file is extant - - we cull a few items, advertisements and otherwise.

These are interesting, alongside the Map of 1866 showing location of houses and shops in the Village.

"The Rensselaerville Academy will open September 8th, 1873, with John Jones, A.B., as Master, assisted by competent Teachers.

Good board can be obtained in Private Families at reasonable rates."

REV. JOHN O. GORDON, President.
JOHN L. RICE, Secretary.

In Issue of Jan. 18th, 1873:

"COOK & GOLDEN

Have just received from New York a large assortment of Dry Goods, Groceries, etc."

Household Words

GO TO RICE'S FOR EVERYTHING

For a whip for your unruly Boy, Wife, or Animal.

Take one of JOHN L. RICE.

PHILIP FRITCH

Undertaker and Cabinet Maker

R. SMITH

Harness Maker

Boots and Shoes

M. & W. FELTER

UNION HOTEL

C. G. BELL

"This establishment is pleasantly situated in the central part of Village. It has large and airy rooms, and superior accommodations for Travelers, Boarders."

FOR SALE

The Law Office and Law Library belonging to the late J. Niles, Esq. Also $2\frac{3}{4}$ acres of desirable land lying north of his late residence and between the Pond Hill Road and Plank Road.

Dated, Jan. 6th, 1873.

(Appearing on Nov. 21st, 1878)

RENSSELAERVILLE ACADEMY

Fall Term Opens Sept. 2, 1878

Principal, B. F. Eaton, A.M.

Rates of Tuition:

Fourth Class 30 cents per week

Third Class 40 cents per week

Junior Class 50 cents per week

Senior Class 60 cents per week

Latin, Greek, French, German, Algebra, Geometry, Book-keeping, Drawing, each or any two, ten cents extra per week. Painting at special rates, etc., etc.

Dressmaking in all its Branches

MISS LUCY GOLDEN

at her residence on Main Street

The Latest Styles at

MISS ETTA FRISBIE'S MILLINERY ROOMS

(Established in 1873)

Over W. & M. Felter's Shoe Store, on Main Street

CHARLES OSWALD

Auctioneer

NORMAN W. FAULKE

Attorney at Law

Preston Hollow.

A. G. BELL

UNION HOUSE — the Oldest and Only Hotel

Notice published in issue of Jan. 15th, 1880.

Dissolution of Partnership under the firm name of

H. WATERBURY & CO.

Is this day dissolved by consent.

HENRY WATERBURY

F. C. HUYCK.

Dated, Jan. 2nd, 1880.

STATISTICS, ETC. RELATING TO RENSSELAERVILLE

Year 1790

Population:	
Males	1450
Females	1360
Slaves	11

(New York State Census)

Year 1813

Population (including 21 slaves)	5928
Electors	515
Grain Mills	8
Saw Mills	16
Fulling Mills	3
Carding Factories (9 machines)	2
Distilleries	2
Air Furnace	1
Spinning wheels (in homes, which make yearly about 53,000 yards of cloth for clothing)	2074

Year 1824

(From Gazetteer of State of New York, by Horatio Gates Spofford, LL.D.
The new counties and towns erected in 1823 included.)

Population of Township	3425
Including:	
Farmers	727
Traders	17
Mechanics	145
Foreigners	5
Free blacks	10
Slaves	14
Oil Mills	3
Fulling Machines	6
Carding Machines	6
Asheries	4
Yards Cloth	2662
School Houses	18
Electors	627
Cattle	4000
Horses	1069
Sheep	7089
Grist Mills	6
Saw Mills	11
Village in 1824 showed:	
Houses	50
Stores	3
Grist Mills	3
Saw Mills	2
Carding and clothiers' works	4
Tanners	5
Mechanics shops	11
Lawyers	2
Physician	1
Churches	3
School House	1

Year 1829

Population (Township)	3641
Voters	603
Eligibles for Militia	415

Grist Mills	6
Saw Mills	12
Fulling Mills	2
Carding Machines	5
Distillery	1
Neat Cattle	3827
Horses	1140
Sheep	11719

Note: (by Editor) At about this time, this distillery (Asa Colvard's, at Westerlo) distilled in one year some 11,000 bbls. of whiskey. Commenting on this fact, an early chronicler observes: "The laboring class of people in cold and changeable climates have a natural inclination for using diffusible stimulants, and it is vain to strive for a suppression of that use further than to prescribe preventives and substitutes less deleterious than ardent spirits." Follows a recommendation of malt liquor "this main object thus appears to be the encouragement of brewing in families."

Year 1836

(From Gazeteer of the State of New York, by Thomas F. Gordon)

Rensselaerville (Village) had:

Furnace	1
Taverns	2
Stores	7
Dwellings	175

Year 1843

Population	600-700
Voters	113
Children	300
Schools	8

(According to R. L. Mulford, a resident at time.)

Year 1854

(From Jay Gould's map of 1854)

Rensselaerville: Population	3629
Retail Stores	22
Horses and Mules	985
Neat Cattle	3830
Sheep	9252
Swine	4162

Main crops: Wheat, Barley, Oats, Rye, Buckwheat, Indian Corn, Hay, Potatoes. Other industries: raising wool and dairy products.

Year 1860

(From Gazetteer of the State of New York, by J. H. French)

Rensselaerville (Village) population.....	561
Other villages in Township:	
Medusa (formerly Hall's Mills).....	30 houses
Williamsburg	18 "
Preston Hollow	40 "
Potters Hollow	
Cooksburg	

Note: Cooksburg — named for Thomas B. Cook, of Catskill, who founded the railroad that for two years ran from Catskill to Cooksburg, when rails were taken up ("Catskill to Canajoharie R.R.").

"Upon the farm of Ezra Lester in a place known as Willow Glen, formerly stood a village known as Peckham Hollow, consisting of 2 stores, 2 smith's shops, and 14 houses. For a time it was a rival of Rensselaerville, but now, not a vestige of it remains."

COINAGE

Bookkeeping records of early Rensselaerville show accounts reckoned in Pounds, Shillings and Pence; and until a late date shillings continued to be used.

J. R. Bartlett's "Dictionary of Americana" (1859) defines Shilling: "the name given in the State of New York to the Spanish real; in the neighboring states, it is frequently called a York shilling. . . . In New York, when the decimal system of reckoning was adopted (1792) the pound was worth only \$2.50; and the shilling, 12½ cents or eight shillings to the dollar."

EARLY SUPERVISORS

For Town of
RENSSELAERVILLE
Years 1818 - 1838.

1818	Asa Colvard
1819-21	Eli Hutchinson
1822-3	Nathaniel Rider
1824	Isaac Gardner
1826-7	Wheeler Watson
1828-9	Joseph Conner
1830-31	John Niles
1832	Nathaniel Rider
1833	Nathaniel Rider
1834-5	Charles L. Mulford
1836	James Reade
1837	Samuel Niles
1838-9	Louis M. Dayton

LIST OF SOLDIERS

Buried in Rensselaerville.

COMMUNITY CEMETERY (1801)

Revolutionary Soldiers:

Nathan Dayton
Benjamin Frisbie
Reuben King
Samuel Jenkins
Job Rider
Apollos Moore
Matthew Mulford
Silas Sweet
Josiah Skinner
Daniel Conkling

Civil War Soldiers:

George Van Wie
Lewis W. Davis

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CEMETERY (1844)

Civil War Soldiers:

Marcus Cooper
Richard Rider
Nathaniel Teed
Samuel Nelson Shultes
David Gathen.

RENSSELAERVILLE BUSINESS DIRECTORY—1866

W. P. Sweet — Dealer in Drugs, Medicines, Groceries, &c.

C. Cook — Dealer in General Merchandise and P. M.

G. C. Thomas — Pastor, M. E. Church.

Robert Washbon — Pastor, Episcopal Church.

T. G. Smith — Dealer in Tinware and Stoves.

P. Fritch & Co. — Cabinet Makers.

A. Gallup — Saloon Keeper.

I. H. Willsey — Hotel Proprietor.

C. T. Bush — General Agent, Wood's Mower and Reaper.

M. Barry — Attorney and Counsellor at Law.

D. Severson — Miller.

H. Waterbury — Woolen Manufacturer.

Mrs. E. Smith — Resident.

(FURTHER NOTES ON EPISCOPAL CHURCH)

Dr. Fuller died on April 9th, 1842, and was succeeded by his curate, the Reverend Robert Washbon, born Utica, N. Y., 1817; graduate of Union College and the General Theological Seminary of New York. His first wife was Harriet Jenkins; his second, Euphrasia Cook, who died on the same day as her husband; March 4th, 1892. It was during Mr. Washbon's time that (1844) the church burial ground was opened. Dr. Washbon started the Parochial School, situated on the slope just below the church, which many old-time residents of Rensselaerville today recall attending in their youth. Mr. Anthony Edgar Burt was the teacher, and exercised a lasting influence for good upon the lives of all those who were fortunate to have been his pupils.

Rev. Samuel Chalmers Thompson succeeded Dr. Washbon. Born June 30th, 1848, Cartersville, Ga: graduate of Trinity College, Hartford. He taught school for a while; held various pastorates; and in 1887, came to Rensselaerville as the rector's assistant, in the same year that the parsonage and lot adjoining the church were bought by the vestry. On Dr. Washbon's death in 1892, the Bishop appointed Mr. Thompson as "Missionary", in which capacity he served for 23 years in all. (The present scribe recalls her first visit to the Rectory, as a child; and her delight at viewing the BIRCHBARK MAN! That Mr. Thompson had made, all by himself!) On account of ill health, Mr. Thompson resigned in November, 1909; and moved to Clearwater, on the west coast of Florida, where he spent the rest of his days.

Dr. John Prout, his successor, was born at Lenoir, N. C., on February 9th, 1855; graduated at Trinity College, 1877, and General Theological Seminary in 1880; became a curate in Rensselaerville, 1881-86, where he married Miss Emma Rice. After various charges, he returned to Rensselaerville in 1910, where he remained Rector of Trinity Church, until his death on March 23rd, 1930. His service lacked a few months of 50 years, 28 of them spent in Rensselaerville.

It is a somewhat striking fact that in the year 1939, the present incumbent, Mr. Reginald T. Bliss is only the sixth in line over a period of 125 years; and with no more than five years without a rector.

Excerpts from
 "THE REDSKINS, OR INDIAN AND INJIN"
 J. Fenimore Cooper — 1845-46

Preface: "a state of things which will not encourage the rich to hold real estate would not be desirable since it would be diverting their money, knowledge, liberality, feelings and leisure, from the improvement of the soil, to objects neither so useful nor so praiseworthy."

* * * *

"It would be idle to deny that the great principle which lies at the bottom of anti-rentism, if principle it can be called, is the assumption of a claim that the interests and wishes of numbers are to be respected though done at a sacrifice of the clearest rights of a few."

* * * *

"It would be just as true to affirm that domestic slavery is opposed to the institutions of the United States as to say the same of these leases."

Reprinted from
 "EDMUND NILES HUYCK — THE STORY OF A
 LIBERAL. — (1935)"

By permission of Mrs. Edmund Niles Huyck.

"Only of one thing was Huyck certain: that—and with a gesture he indicated his own property—in years to come no single individual would be permitted to own as much as he did. To the public, he contended, should belong at least the natural beauties of such a sheet of water. It was no passing thought, for in Edmund Huyck's will he asked that the Pond and its shores be set aside for the enjoyment of the people forever."

Extract from Citation presented with the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters by Union College in June, 1930:

"Edmund Niles Huyck, Bachelor of Arts in the Class of 1888 at Williams College, President of the Kenwood Mills, . . . your activities and your good works are so great in number that it is almost tedious to enumerate them. . . . You are one of the far-sighted capitalists upon whom the hope of the future rests."

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